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THE WORKS

OF THE

REV. JOHN MACLAURIN.

EDITED BY

W. H. GOOLD, D.D.,
EDINBURGH

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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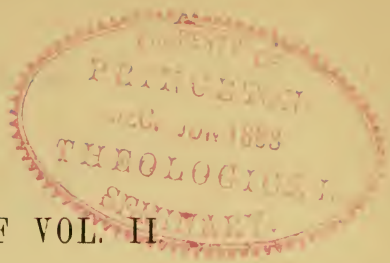

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ESSAY III.

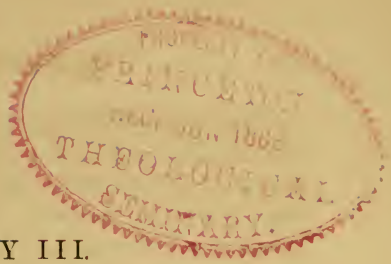
ON CHRISTIAN PIETY.

PREFATORY NOTE.

It must ever be matter of regret that the following treatise was left by its author unfinished, for it is in substance and spirit a noble argument against theoretic legalism. A profession of attachment to Christian doctrine does not necessarily imply the surrender of the heart to the merits and mediation of Christ as the sole ground of a sinner's justification before God. In the times of Maclaurin, evangelical views of divine truth were openly impugned by many who professed to be Christians, and the necessity of pure morals was insisted on, to the disparagement of faith, which, according to Scripture, is the only source of all genuine holiness. It is the design of this treatise to illustrate and prove the truth that faith is the essential characteristic of Christian piety,—that it holds no subordinate place in Christian duty,—that it gives not merely complexion, but reality to the Christian life. In every age the leaven of the opposite belief will be found at work, if not in avowed theory, at least in the self-righteous tendencies of the human heart. The following treatise is designed to refute it, more especially in its positive and theoretic form. Beginning with a general view of the main doctrine of the Gospel, our author gradually conducts his readers to a strong impression of the indispensable character of faith—special faith in the atoning work of Christ—if we would be, in any proper sense of the term, Christians. All revelation is seen to stand or fall with a conviction of the necessity of faith in the atonement of the cross as exclusively the means of salvation.

ANALYSIS.

After a statement of the doctrine of redemption, it is proved that Scripture represents faith in Christ as indispensable to the enjoyment of its blessings, pp. 9-12. True faith is next shewn to include, not merely a general acknowledgment of the divine mission of Christ, but of redemption as the principal end of His mission; because faith is the means of justification, because redemption is a truth of the highest moment to the sinner, because faith has respect to the distinctive character of the work of Christ, and because of the principal ends and uses of faith, as they are exhibited in Scripture, pp. 12-16. The transcendent importance of an habitual acknowledgment of divine mercy in redemption is still further illustrated, pp. 17-25. Faith, or the proper acknowledgment of divine mercy in redemption, is exhibited in reference to the ends contemplated by it,—the glory of God, the justification of the sinner, our progressive sanctification, and spiritual aid in all duty and worship, pp. 26-28. The evangelical character of redemption is still further illustrated by the fact that faith, according to Scripture, is the acceptance of a free offer made by God, pp. 29-34. The same conclusion is established by the ultimate object of faith, as including all the persons of Godhead, with the different offices sustained by each in the economy of grace,—by just views of our sinful and helpless condition,—by a clear view of the origin and the excellence of all the blessings offered in the gospel,—by the regard particularly to the mediation of Christ, which Scripture enjoins, as a man could not be supposed to value the blessings of the gospel, and yet deny Him through whom they come,—by the obligation to honour redemption as manifestative of the divine perfections, especially of divine justice, without the recognition of which there can be no true repentance, and of the divine mercy, without a sense of which there can be no effectual humiliation before God,—by the efficacy attributed in Scripture exclusively to redemption by Christ in giving the sinner peace of conscience, and a good hope in the promises of the covenant,—and lastly, by the special reference which faith is enjoined to make, not merely to the oblation, but to the intercession of Christ, pp. 35-67.



ESSAY III.

ON CHRISTIAN PIETY.

BESIDES the duties that are incumbent on us, as we are rational creatures, and as we are sinners, it is needful to consider the duties which we are obliged to, as we are sinners to whom the salvation revealed in the Gospel is freely and graciously offered. It is sufficient, for the design of this Essay, to take such a short comprehensive view of the Christian doctrines, as is requisite for explaining the chief parts and characters of Christian piety. The chief peculiar doctrines of the Gospel relate to the divine promises of salvation and happiness; the principal causes of that salvation, particularly the mercy and power of God in the mediation of his Son, and the effectual grace of his Spirit; the divine nature and glory of both; the means of that salvation on our part, namely, the means of an interest in the divine promises, and the means of obtaining the accomplishment of them; and particularly the constant improvement that ought to be made of all the grounds of our hope and joy as motives to love and obedience.

I. Suitable acknowledgment of the mercy of God in our redemption by Christ, is a principal branch of Christian piety. The same Scripture instructions which prove the necessity and importance of such acknowledgment, serve also to explain the nature and character of it.

The doctrine of redemption itself, is evidently contained in the many Scriptures, which treat of the causes

and effect of Christ's death; and is mixed and interwoven with all the other most important doctrines and instructions of holy Scripture. The Scriptures which treat most directly of Christ's death, show that it was a real and complete satisfaction to divine justice for our sins, and that it is the meritorious cause of all the parts of our salvation. It is called a sacrifice, a ransom, a propitiation, an atonement for our sins. The meaning of these and the like Scripture expressions, is abundantly evident from the obvious import of the words themselves, and from a great variety of equivalent expressions made use of on the same important subject. Thus we are told that Christ died for our sins, was delivered for our offences, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; that the iniquities of us all were laid on him—that he bare the sins of many—that he bare our sins in his own body to the tree—that he who knew no sin was made sin for us—that he suffered the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. It is impossible to devise stronger and clearer assertions of Christ's substitution in the room of sinners. As the Scriptures which have been hinted at, treat more directly of the causes of Christ's death, the doctrine of redemption is contained, with equal evidence, in the Scriptures which treat more directly of the effects of his death. Thus we are taught, "that we have redemption in Christ's blood, the remission of sins; that his blood was shed for the remission of the sins of many; that thereby he reconciles us to God by the blood of his cross; that his blood cleanses from all sin; that it purges the consciences of sinners from dead works, and gives them boldness to draw near to God." Whereas, some of these Scriptures ascribe our redemption to Christ's death, and others of them ascribe it to his sufferings in general; there are various Scriptures which show that the merits

of his obedience are included in his satisfaction, taken in its full extent. Thus we are told that by his obedience we are made righteous, Rom. v. 19, and that by his righteousness we receive the justification of life. But these things may be more fully proved in another section, designed for vindicating the grounds of Christian piety from objections.

II. As to the means of an interest in Christ's redemption: whereas the Scripture gives various warnings concerning the inefficacy of a dead faith, or of that faith which is without works, it teaches us also that there is a sincere holy faith, which works by love, and which has a necessary and sure connection with salvation. Thus we are taught, that "by grace we are saved, through faith;" that "being justified by faith we have peace with God;" that "God sent his Son into the world, that whosoever believes in him may not perish, but have life everlasting;" that "he who believes has passed from death to life;" that "to as many as receive Christ, even to them that believe in his name, it is given to be the sons of God;" that "through faith in him, sinners receive the remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified." It is evident, from these and many other Scriptures, that that faith which has a connection with salvation, includes the belief and acknowledgment of the things revealed concerning Christ. Though the Scripture sometimes speaks of that faith which is a principal means of salvation, without speaking expressly of the object of it; yet where the object is mentioned, there is mention made of Christ, or of some of the most important truths concerning him. Whereas a great many different things are revealed in Scripture concerning Christ, it is generally owned that they are not all of equal importance. Thus, for instance, the various truths

relating only to the outward instruments and circumstances of his death, are not of equal importance with the truths above-mentioned, concerning the chief causes and effects of his death; that is to say, the truths necessarily included in the doctrine of redemption. But, whereas some people speak of that faith in Christ, which the Scripture makes so necessary, as if it did not imply an acknowledgment of redemption itself, but only a general acknowledgment of Christ's being the promised Messiah, or of His divine mission, and the proof of it by His resurrection; it is of importance to show how far such notions of faith in Christ deviate from the Scripture account of it.

III. The same arguments which prove the truth and reality of redemption, do in effect prove the importance and necessity of acknowledging it: and that suitable acknowledgment of it is implied in that faith in Christ, which the Scripture so much insists on. That faith which is so great a means of salvation, if it include any thing, must include the acknowledgment of the meritorious cause of salvation. If a man only acknowledge, in general, Christ's divine mission, he acknowledges nothing concerning Christ, but what is common to Him with all the prophets and apostles. Due acknowledgment of Christ as the promised Messiah, includes an acknowledgment of the principal thing promised concerning Him, which is His purchasing our redemption. Suitable acknowledgment of Christ's mission must imply an acknowledgment of redemption, as the principal end of His mission.

The apostle Paul tells us, that "God hath set forth His Son to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness in the remission of sins," Rom. iii. 25. This plainly implies that that faith by

which we seek and obtain the remission of sins, is faith in Christ's blood; or that that faith which is the means of pardon has for its object the blood of Christ, as the meritorious cause of pardon. When Christ's satisfaction is called "the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9, this plainly supposes that true faith must fix our hope on that righteousness as the cause of our salvation. According to Scripture style, to be justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in His Son, and to be justified by faith, are but different ways of expressing the same doctrine. This supposes that that faith which is the means of our justification, includes our applying to God's mercy through redemption, and our building our hope and pleading upon it.

Faith in Christ must include the acknowledgment of those things concerning Him that are of the greatest importance. Nothing can be of greater importance to sinners than redemption from sin. Whatever proves the importance of God's moral law, proves the importance of deliverance from its penal sanction, and of conformity to its holy precepts. The Scriptures above cited prove that redemption is the cause of both.

Faith in Christ must include acknowledgment of the things that are peculiar to Him, and that distinguish Him from others who have been sent from God. Others who were sent from God have revealed His will, given a pattern of our duty by their example, and confirmed the truth by their sufferings. It is peculiar to Christ that he has made atonement for our sins.

The various principal ends and uses of faith in Christ show that redemption must be the object of it. As our justification through Christ's redemption is a principal end of faith, this shows that acknowledgment of that redemption belongs to the nature of faith. As it is also

a principal end of faith, that it may work by love, it must include an acknowledgment of those things concerning Christ that are the chief motives of love. When the apostle Paul says, that "the love of Christ constrains us," 2 Cor. v. 14, he gives this as the reason of it, because "we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." The plain meaning of this is, that the love of Christ constrains us because we believe and acknowledge our redemption by Him. The whole strain of the New Testament represents redemption as the highest manifestation of divine love and mercy. If redemption be God's chief gift, due acknowledgment of it must be a redeemed sinner's chief duty. But of this more fully afterwards.

Another end of faith in Christ is to exclude boasting, Rom. iii. 27,—to hinder glorying in ourselves, "that He who glorieth may glory in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 31, and that we may give due honour to God's sovereign free mercy in our salvation. The Scripture tells us that salvation "is of faith, that it may be by grace, and that the law of faith excludes boasting." These, and the like Scripture instructions, plainly import, that by true faith we ascribe our salvation to the true meritorious cause of it. We are told that they who sought justification otherwise than by faith, made Christ's death to have been in vain, and made His cross of none effect. This implies that true faith in Christ acknowledges the efficacy of His death or of His cross, while unbelief denies or lessens it. This may also be proved from the Scripture account, not only of the ends, but also of the causes and means of faith.

When we are directed to seek the Spirit of God to make us know the love of Christ that passes knowledge; it implies that just impressions of divine love in our

redemption are a chief end of the operations of the Spirit of God. When we are told that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, and that the law leads to Him; it is evident from such Scriptures, especially when compared with other Scriptures, that suitable impressions of our need of redemption, and of the glory of it, are a main design of divine instructions concerning the law of God. When preaching the Gospel is called preaching Christ's cross, or preaching "Christ crucified," 1 Cor. i. 18, 23. —when it is mentioned to the Galatians, as the great privilege they had by gospel instructions and institutions, that Christ crucified had been evidently set forth before them, Gal. iii. 1.—when both the sacraments are described as representing and applying the efficacy of Christ's death, Rom. vi. 3, 1 Cor. xi.—all these things show that our honouring the love and mercy of God in our redemption, is a main design of all divine ordinances and institutions. Seeing therefore that due acknowledgment of redemption, is a main design of the work of the Spirit of God, of the doctrine of His law, of all the instructions of His word and of all the ordinances of His worship; it is evident that such acknowledgment not only is included in that faith in Christ which the Gospel requires, but even that it is the very main and principal thing included in it.

The Scriptures which treat of access to God in His worship, and of a spiritual fulness of peace and joy in God, speak of these privileges as the effects both of Christ's blood, and of faith, in such a way as shows that that faith which is the means of these privileges, has for its object that blood, or redemption in Christ's blood, which is the meritorious cause of them. Thus, as to the efficacy of faith, we are told, that it is by faith we draw near to God and have access to him, Eph. ii. 18, that they who trust in God according to His word are

filled with joy and peace in believing, Rom. xv. 13, and that, believing in Christ, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. On the other part, as to the efficacy of Christ's blood, we are told that it is the new and living way, by which we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, Heb. x. 19.—that it is that blood that purges our consciences from dead works to serve the living God, Heb. ix. 14, and that we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, having received the atonement, Rom. v. 11. These, and the like Scriptures, show, that that faith by which men attain to spiritual joy, and peace and access to God, has for its object Christ's blood and atonement or redemption.

The great law of prayer, that we should ask all things in Christ's name, proves that our faith in Him must imply an acknowledgment of His having purchased all things for us. It is the doctrine of redemption that explains God's bestowing all blessings on us, and His accepting all our sincere services, for Christ's sake. Our obligation to apply to God in His name, might be justly inferred from that doctrine, though it were not otherwise expressly enjoined. But we are not left to learn that important practice merely by inference and deduction. It is inculcated upon us in the most express manner, and very frequently. We are required in all our addresses to the throne of God, and in all our endeavours to serve Him acceptably, to ask all things for Christ's sake, and to do all things in His name, John xiv. 13; Col. iii. 17.

IV. The various arguments that have been adduced, are sufficient to prove, that acknowledgment of redemption is necessarily included in that faith in Christ, which the Scripture so much insists on. They show also the great importance of such acknowledgment,—how much it should habitually occupy the minds and hearts

of Christians; and how justly it may be considered as the life and soul of practical Christianity. But this deserves more particular confirmation, on various accounts.

The transcendent importance of acknowledging divine mercy in redemption, ought by no means to be understood so as to interfere with habitual particular consideration of the other doctrines and precepts of religion. This is contrary to the nature and ends of true faith in Christ, and is a very dangerous extreme. But it is also a very dangerous thing to acknowledge redemption only in a superficial way.

How much the mystery of redemption and salvation by the mercy of God in Christ should occupy the minds and hearts of Christians, may appear from the consideration of the following things: namely, the nature and properties of redemption itself; various express assertions in Scripture concerning the place it should have in our thoughts and affections; the style of Scripture concerning it, by which the whole of Christianity receives its denomination from that important doctrine; the manner in which the apostles inculcate it, mixing it with all other divine instructions, improving it as the chief motive for enforcing all Christian precepts; the warnings given concerning those who opposed it or perverted it; the account given of the operations of the Spirit of God enabling men to form just apprehensions and impressions of it; the commendations given of distinguishing privileges of the New Testament dispensation, as arising from a clearer discovery of it; together with the descriptions given of the Christian life, as a life of faith on the Son of God.

As to the nature of redemption itself, its transcendent importance has been in some measure explained and proved already, and will be more fully considered after-

wards. It is obvious, that seeing it is an incomparable display of the perfections of God, and especially of His mercy to sinners a propensity to a suitable acknowledgment of it is a thing which hearers of the gospel are under the highest obligations, in point of justice and gratitude, as well as interest. As was observed before, if redemption is God's chief gift, suitable acknowledgment of it is the redeemed sinner's chief duty. Neglect of such acknowledgment is the highest contempt of divine mercy and of divine authority. They who deny redemption, such as the unbelieving Jews and others, are far less inconsistent with themselves, than they who own the reality of it, but satisfy themselves with mere superficial acknowledgments of it.

It is the doctrine of our redemption and salvation by Christ that the apostle has in view, when he says that he was determined to know nothing else, among those to whom he preached, but Christ and him crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2, that he gloried in nothing else but in the cross of Christ, Gal. vi. 14, that he counted all things else as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Phil. iii. 8. Such expressions plainly import something more than merely that the doctrine of Christ's redemption and mediation is a part, or a necessary part, of the Christian revelation: they plainly import, that it is of peculiar and transcendent importance; and that, as other doctrines which may be distinguished from it, and which by no means should be neglected, have a manifold connexion with it, or a manifold relation to it, so it is in that view that they should be habitually considered.

It is evident that no doctrine can properly be denominated from any of the least important branches of it, but from its main scope and design. The whole of Christianity receives its denomination from the mystery

of redemption. When teaching Christianity is called preaching Christ, the preaching of the cross, or of Christ crucified, and preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ; and when the whole Christian revelation is called the word of grace, the word of reconciliation, the word of salvation, the word of life, and the gospel of the grace of God; the force of this argument, from these names of the word of God, is founded on this, that they are names given to it by the Spirit of God.

In considering how the apostles inculcate the doctrine in view, it is of use to distinguish betwixt the doctrinal and the practical parts of their writings; understanding these words in the strictest sense, in so far as there is a difference betwixt the doctrines and precepts of Christianity, though all its doctrines are of a practical nature and tendency.

As to the doctrinal parts of the writings in view, it is proper to observe these two things. First, that some branch or other of the mystery of redemption is to be met with in the doctrinal instructions of the apostles everywhere; and secondly, that all other doctrines are considered in their relation to it. As to the first: the divine perfections manifested in redemption; the divine law established by it; the blessings purchased by it; our need of it; the manner of obtaining an interest in it, and the fruits of it; the sufficiency, the excellency, the completeness of it; and, in a special manner, the incomprehensible mercy and kindness of God displayed in it; the divine nature and glory of the Son of God who purchased redemption, and of His Spirit who applies it; with various other things which show its glory and importance; are to be met with everywhere in those parts of the apostolical writings that may, in the strictest sense, be called doctrinal.

As to the other point, namely, that the doctrines which may be distinguished from the mystery of redemption are considered in their relation to it; this is evident both as to the other peculiar doctrines of revelation, and as to the doctrines of natural religion, which they necessarily presuppose. When the apostle says, that Christ is the end of the law, Rom. x. 4, which law is a main branch of natural religion, though more fully discovered in Scripture; this implies, as was hinted before, that it is a principal end and use of the law, to guilty transgressors, to show them their need of that salvation through Christ which the gospel reveals. As to the other truths of natural religion, which may be some way distinguished from the doctrine of the divine law; such as the truths relating to God's being, attributes, and works; the apostle Paul considers these things in their relation to the divine law, and the discovery it gives of our need of the grace of the gospel. When He is proving our need of that justification and salvation which the gospel reveals, He uses a chain of reasoning much to this purpose: that the visible works of God clearly manifest His invisible glory, or His eternal power and Godhead—that this founds an obligation to obey His moral law, or to glorify Him and to be thankful to Him—that it renders transgression inexcusable—that all, being guilty before God, have need to seek that justification which is given freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in His Son, Rom. i. 20, 21; iii. 23, 24. Thus the chief doctrines of natural religion concerning God's being, attributes, works, and law, are considered as subservient to the great doctrines of revelation, concerning God's mercy and grace.

As to those parts of the writings of the apostles, which may be more strictly called practical, or which treat more directly of the divine precepts, the doctrine of salvation

through Christ is almost everywhere intermixed with them, and improved for enforcing them. The duties of faith, love, hope, and joy, relating to Christ's mediation, and the mercy manifested in it, are represented both as a chief part of Christian practice, and as having the most powerful influence on all the other parts of it. Thus redemption has a manifold influence on sanctification. It purchases sanctifying grace, and affords the most powerful motives to holiness. It is from that rich source the inspired writers draw the chief motives to every duty, and against every sin. But of this more fully afterwards, in considering the manifold influence of faith on universal holiness.

Besides those practical parts of the apostolical writings, which treat chiefly on duties incumbent on Christians of all sorts, in all conditions, there are some parts which relate to particular emergencies and occurrences, and which may be called occasional parts. It is observable, that in these passages, whatever be the subject treated of, the apostles did not think it contrary to the rules of just composure, to mix with it some instructions relating to the doctrine of salvation. Thus, for instance, when the apostle is speaking to the Corinthians about the incestuous person, whom he requires them to put out from among them, He puts them in mind that Christ, their passover, had been sacrificed for them, and that therefore, in keeping the spiritual passover, they ought to purge out the old leaven, 1 Cor. v. 7, and when he is vindicating himself to the same Corinthians from the imputation of unsteadiness in his purposes, he brings in the consideration of God's unchangeableness in His promises, which are in Christ yea and amen, 2 Cor. i. 20. These, and the like instances, show how much the doctrine of the grace of Christ occupied the hearts of the

apostles. Every thing put them in mind of it; they did not allow themselves to have it long out of their view; nor did any other branch of spiritual instruction make them lose sight of it. It is evident that in this, as in other things, their example should be a pattern to others; and that, not only to Christian teachers, though they indeed have a special concern in such examples, but all Christians in general. All are under the same obligations, in the main, to honour the mercy of God in our salvation.

The importance of suitable acknowledgment of redemption, may appear further from the manner in which the apostles speak of those who opposed that doctrine, or who perverted it. As to the unbelieving Jews, who opposed it, the manner in which Paul expresses his sorrow on account of their blindness, has astonished his readers in all ages, Rom. ix. 1—3. Though some things in the apostle's discourse on that head are obscure, one thing is very plain, namely, that he looked on that blindness of his countrymen, which he so much bewails, as very dismal. Let us consider what that blindness was. It is certain that these unbelieving Jews were far from being atheists. They owned the being of God, His attributes, His providence, and His law. They even pretended to be zealous for the law. It was their rejecting Christ's mediation and redemption that filled the apostle's heart with such displeasure and sorrow. This is evident, from the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth chapter of the epistle above cited; and it shows what impressions the apostle had of the importance of that doctrine which these people rejected.

But it is useful to consider, not only how the apostles speak of the unbelieving Jews who opposed the doctrine in view, but of the judaizing Christians who perverted it,

and particularly the false apostles, so often mentioned or hinted at in the epistles of Paul, Gal. i. ii., &c. Whereas these men not only owned the doctrine of God's being, attributes, and law, but owned also Christ's divine mission; the main thing blamed in their scheme of doctrine, is its tendency to frustrate the grace of God, and to make the death of Christ to have been in vain, with respect to our justification before God, Gal. ii., at the end; that is to say, their doctrine derogated greatly from the glory of God's sovereign mercy in our justification and salvation through Christ. Though that party is blamed also for their false zeal for the ceremonial law; yet as that is but a part of the charge against them, so the evil of it is represented as consisting mainly in its being injurious to the efficacy of Christ's death. For where people went no further than a scrupulous adherence to the ceremonial precepts; though the apostle speaks of such Christians as weak brethren, Rom. xiv. 1, he is far from speaking of them as he does of the false apostles. It is that sort of men he had in view, in the strong and uncommon expressions in which he warns the Galatians against whoever should preach another gospel to them than what they had heard before, though it were an angel from heaven, Gal. i. 8.

The Scriptures which treat of the enlightening grace of the Spirit of God, show that a main design of it is to give us right views of the mystery of our redemption by the Son of God. Thus Paul prays, in behalf of the Ephesians, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they might know what is the hope of his calling, and the riches of his inheritance in the saints;" and also, "that God would strengthen them with

might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, that they might be rooted and grounded in love; and that they might know what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge." He tells the Corinthians, "That God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into men's hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ." It is observable, that as several of the most remarkable prayers in the writings of the apostles are prayers for divine light, so the principal thing mentioned in them is that light which gives right views of the mystery of our salvation.

The Scriptures which mention the reason why God honours the gospel to be the instrument of His power in the salvation of sinners, show that one main reason of it is, because the gospel reveals the mystery of our redemption. When the apostle Paul affirms that the gospel is the power of God to salvation, and adds this as the reason of it—"for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith"—it is our justification and salvation through Christ that he has in view; as appears both from the context, and from other Scriptures where the righteousness which is of God by faith is insisted on. When our Saviour tells Nicodemus, that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, "so must the Son of man be lifted up," that comparison plainly tells how sinners are to seek that divine power that heals the diseases of the soul; that it is by believing contemplation of Christ crucified, held up to view in gospel ordinances for that end.

When the apostles commend the distinguishing advantages and privileges of the New Testament dispensation, they inculcate, that one of the chief of these privi-

leges, is a clearer and fuller discovery of the causes, and of the way and means of reconciliation with God through the Mediator, 2 Cor. iii. This is represented as a main thing that exalts the New Testament church-state to a nearer resemblance of the heavenly blessedness, as being a principal means of higher degrees of holiness and happiness. But of this elsewhere.

The descriptions given in Scripture of the Christian life, as a life of faith on the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us, Gal. ii. 20, the precepts which require us not only to come to him and to receive him, but also to abide in him, to walk in him, being rooted and built up in him, stablished in the faith, and abounding therein with thanksgiving, Col. ii. 7, the comparisons which represent Christ's sacrifice as our spiritual meat and drink, with various other Scripture instructions of the like import and tendency; show very clearly of what importance it is to abound in suitable acknowledgment of redemption. They show, in effect, that it is of the same importance to the spiritual life of the soul, as natural feeding is to the life of the body.

V. Several things that have been taken notice of, in proving the importance of habitual acknowledgment of Christ's mediation, serve in part to explain the nature and properties of it. In order to further explication of it, it is useful to consider some of the principal ends of it; which may be gathered not only from those Scriptures which treat more directly of faith itself, but also from the Scriptures which treat of the ends of Christ's mediation, and of the doctrine of the gospel which reveals it. It is of importance to consider this subject, because it is evident, that true faith in Christ must have such characters as render it fit for answering the ends for which it is designed.

It is common to faith in Christ with all other holy duties, that the glory of God is the chief and highest end of it. But as it is incumbent on reasonable creatures, to honour the divine perfections suitably to the manifestations that are made to them of these perfections, it is evidently a main thing incumbent on redeemed sinners, and a principal end of faith in the Redeemer, to honour the mercy and grace, and other divine perfections of God, as manifested in redemption. Thus, when the apostle Paul is speaking of God's gracious purposes concerning our salvation, he says, that the end of these things is, that we may be to the praise of His glory, who trust in Christ, Eph. i. 6, 12, 11, 7. particularly the praise of the glory of His grace, (or free undeserved mercy,) and the showing forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness in Christ; and that God fulfils all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in us, 2 Thess. i. 12. As it is the end of believing the great truths of natural religion, that we may honour God's perfections manifested in the work of creation and providence; so it is evident, from the Scriptures now cited, and many others, that the end of knowing and believing the gospel is our honouring God's perfections manifested in the work of our redemption and salvation. A rooted disposition and propensity to comply with that excellent end, must be a chief character of that faith which the Scripture calls faith unfeigned. Such faith must, in a special manner, incline a sinner's heart to honour the grace, or undeserved mercy of God. This is plainly implied both in the Scriptures above cited, and in other Scriptures, which show that it is a principal end of faith that boasting may be excluded, that no flesh may

glory in God's sight, but that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord, 1 Cor. i. 13.

The Scriptures formerly adduced, to prove that there is a sincere holy faith which has a sure connection with salvation, show that it is a chief end of faith in Christ, that, having an interest in Christ's redemption, we may be thereby justified before God. The same Scriptures prove also, that a state of justification includes not only freedom from condemnation, but an actual right to life eternal, and to all the blessings of the covenant of grace; and that true faith in Christ is the means, not only of bringing us into that state, but also of our continuance in it. Hence it would be exceeding unreasonable to imagine, that acknowledgment of Christ's mediation is necessary only at a sinner's first conversion to God; it is equally necessary ever after. The Christian life, as was already observed from Scripture, is a life of faith on the Son of God. It will be fully proved afterwards, that the peculiar influence of faith in Christ, on our justification through Him, does not derogate from the necessity of repentance; as it includes, not only sincere sorrow for sin, but also a returning from sin to God and universal holiness. These things are inseparable from true faith; they are of equal necessity with it, though not of the same influence on our interest in Christ's mediation, of which due acknowledgment of that mediation is the immediate effectual means; as in other cases, entering into certain endearing relations (as by marriage or adoption) is that by which one receives a right to the benefits belonging to these relations; having an interest in a new inheritance, by virtue of such relation to the first purchaser and proprietor of it.

The whole tenor of Scripture doctrine concerning faith and its objects, shows that a principal end of it is sancti-

fication, or universal holiness. This is, in effect, included in what was proved before, about our active glorifying God as the end of our faith. The holy Scripture shows that true holiness is the end of our redemption by the Son of God, Tit. ii. 14, of the gracious operations of the Spirit of God, and of the promises of God's covenant as well as of the precepts of His law, 2 Pet. i. 4.

It is needful to observe, that it is the end of faith in Christ, and of Scripture instructions concerning it, not only to direct us in seeking all the parts of salvation, for Christ's sake, in prayer, and other duties of worship; but also to direct us in all other endeavours in what the Scripture calls the work of our salvation, Rom. ix. 32, and particularly of our sanctification; and that it is by faith we are to seek after, not only an interest in Christ's mediation, but also a well-founded abundant hope of that interest, though other means of hope must by no means be excluded, Rom. xv. 13.

VI. As it is of great importance to have just conceptions of the way of attaining to an interest in Christ's mediation, so it is a very useful illustration of it that the Scripture gives us, in comparing it to the way of giving and acquiring a right to any thing among men, by free gift or donation: in which case, two things concur to make up a right or title; namely an offer or free promise on the part of the giver, and acceptance on the part of the receiver. Thus, in holy Scripture, as Christ is called the gift of God, John iv. 10, and the free gift, Rom. v. 15, and we are said to be justified freely through the redemption that is in Him, Rom. iii. 24, so faith is described by our receiving Christ, John i. 12, our taking the waters of life freely, Rev. xxi. 6, without money and without price, Isa. lv. 1, our giving suitable acceptation to the true and faithful saying, that Christ came

to save sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15, and we are told, that salvation is of faith, that it might be by grace, Rom. iv. 6. The Scripture descriptions of the object of faith, of the nature and of the ends of it, show that an interest in the Mediator is given by way of free and gratuitous donation. To avoid wrong apprehensions of this important subject, it is needful to guard against two opposite hurtful errors: one is, that God offers happiness without holiness; the other is, that the free offers of the gospel only import a connection between sincere holiness and happiness: as if we were to be beholden to ourselves for holiness, and to Christ only for its connection with a reward. The Scriptures above cited, and compared with other Scriptures, show that God offers holiness and happiness, (of which holiness is a chief part,) and all the blessings of the covenant of grace, freely through the Mediator of it. The sanctifying grace of the Spirit of God, the efficient cause of holiness, and faith itself, which is a principal means of it, are both of them the fruits of Christ's redemption, and both are called the gift of God, Gal. iii. 14; Eph. ii. 8; Acts x. 45.

It may be objected, that there is a considerable disparity betwixt free donation among men, and the manner in which God confers salvation or a right to it: because among men, verbal acceptance is sufficient; whereas the acceptance required, in the concerns of salvation, is an acceptance with the whole heart; and consequently with such penitential and holy dispositions as are not easily attained to: and it may be said, that this makes it exceeding difficult to attain to any considerable measure of hope, as to a man's interest in that salvation, even where there may be a sincere concern and cordial acceptance of it.

In answer to this objection, though the things men-

tioned in it prove some disparity bewixt free donation in other cases and in the concerns of salvation; yet, notwithstanding that disparity, the free mercy and bounty of God, in the way of conferring justification and salvation, is incomparably above what takes place in any other donation whatever. Among men, verbal acceptance must give a right to what is offered as a gift; because men cannot see into the heart, or judge of it. But if they could, a benefactor might be said to offer a gift freely, though he promised it only to those who should accept of it cordially, and not to those who in their hearts undervalue and despise it. If it is difficult to bring up the hearts of sinners to suitable acceptance of the offers of the gospel, this serves further to commend the freeness of God's mercy, that He makes so gracious proposals to creatures who are so unworthy of them, and so hardly brought to esteem and embrace them. But besides this, as the gospel promises salvation through sincere acceptance of Christ with the whole heart; so it contains gracious promises of God's Spirit to enable sinners to such acceptance. All hearers of the gospel are warranted, encouraged, and required, to seek the accomplishment of these promises on themselves, it being indeed for this end that they are proposed, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 37. Sinners are encouraged to seek this with their whole heart, and to seek it with humble and joyful hope. They are allowed, and even required, to improve all the declarations of God's mercy in His word, as encouragements to such hope. These declarations of God's free, incomparable and incomprehensible mercy, are of such a nature, that they have a powerful tendency, when duly improved, to dispel the discouraging fear and perplexity that is the native effect of guilt in an awakened conscience. Without taking in these manifold encourage-

ments of hope, we cannot have just and adequate views of the free offers of the gospel. And whatever difficulty there may be, as to attaining abundant hope, even where there is a cordial acceptance, it is evident that the cause of that difficulty is not any defect in the free offers of the gospel, and the gospel encouragements of hope; but a culpable defect in men's own apprehensions and practical improvement of these things. No humble Christian will fully acquit himself of all culpable defects of that kind.

VII. The two things that were mentioned as concurring in free donation, namely, an offer or promise on the part of the giver, and acceptance on the part of the receiver, show that there are two principal things which belong to the nature of true faith in Christ, namely, on the one part, sincere persuasion of the divine offers and promises, with suitable dependence on them; and on the other part, cordial esteem of the things offered and promised. This last is perhaps sometimes called acceptance of the offers of the gospel, being indeed a principal thing included in it. But whereas people may esteem and desire what is no way in their offer; it is evident that to receive or accept of a thing, supposes not only that we esteem it, but that it is offered to us, that we know and believe that it is offered, and that we hope for it, by accepting of it in the manner required of us.

Belief of the offers of the Gospel must be a principal branch of true faith, because these offers are a principal part of the Gospel. When we are taught to consider God's covenant as a covenant of promises, and to consider the Mediator of it as one in whom these promises are yea and amen; and when it is represented as the character of those who have an interest in God's covenant, that they take hold of it, Isa. lvi. 4, that they are persuaded

of God's promises, and embrace them, Heb. xi. 13, that they receive the testimony or record of God concerning his giving life eternal through his Son; that they hope in God according to his word, and, which is represented as a very essential act of faith, that they not only believe that God is, but that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and that they take the waters of life freely: these and the like Scriptures plainly imply, that just persuasion and impression of the divine promises and offers is a principal branch of true practical faith. And seeing it is the promise of God that gives a right to salvation; that true faith, the end of which is the salvation of the soul, must fix the heart on that which gives a right and title to salvation. Though there are various other ways of acquiring rights among men, yet seeing God cannot be under such obligations to us, as we are under to one another, we cannot acquire a right to any thing from God but by virtue of his promise. And it is also evident, that without believing and relying on the offers and promises of the Gospel, the doctrines of it cannot administer that relief and consolation which is necessary to an awakened conscience; or to a sinner deeply sensible of sin and concerned about salvation. For though the doctrine of redemption and grace be in itself a joyful doctrine; yet what comfort could it give to know that there is a Redeemer, a Saviour provided for others, but not offered to *us?*

The end of assenting to the offers of the Gospel, is cordial acceptance of them. As a man may esteem and desire what is not in his offer: so what a man knows to be in his offer may be the object of his indifference or aversion. Cordial acceptance of the offers of the gospel must include, not only a persuasion of the reality of them, but also a high esteem of the things contained in them.

That esteem must extend, not only to all the parts, but also to all the causes of salvation, and particularly to Christ's mediation. Our esteem of that mediation must, according to Scripture, imply a disclaiming of the self-confidence formerly explained, a hearty willingness to be indebted to divine free mercy in Christ's redemption, as the source of our salvation; a holy propensity to honour the love and grace, and other perfections of God, manifested in the Mediator of the covenant of grace, and in the promises of it; with a careful improvement of these things as our relief from the fears that are the effects of sin, and as the grounds of our hope and pleading before God, for remission and for all other blessings. All this is partly evident from the Scriptures formerly mentioned in speaking of the objects and the ends of faith, particularly the Scriptures about excluding boasting, about our glorifying God's grace, our glorying only in the Lord, our counting all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ: and further proofs of this matter will occur afterwards, in considering the means and grounds of that esteem which we ought to have of Christ's mediation.

Sincere belief of the offers of the Gospel, and due esteem of the things contained in them, ought to be joined together in our acknowledgments of Christ's mediation. But it is needful to treat of them separately, in order to explain the Scripture-directions relating to this important subject. It is of use to divide these directions into two sorts, as they are more directly subservient to the one or the other of these valuable attainments; between which, however, there is so near a relation, that in treating of the one, we ought not to lose sight of the other. In considering the excellency of the blessings of God's covenant, we should remember that they are blessings gra-

ciously offered to us; and in endeavouring after abundant persuasion of the offers of these things, we should still remember the worth and excellency of them.

VIII. It is of importance, as to all the attainments belonging to faith in Christ, to have just apprehensions of the ultimate object of it. Though in acknowledging Christ's redemption, Christ is to be considered, not only in his highest capacity of divine nature, but as manifested in the flesh and clothed with his mediatory offices, yet all our acknowledgments and desires, all our hope and trust, must ultimately terminate on the divine perfections and authority of God the Father, and of the Son and Holy Ghost, according to the signification and scope of the Christian baptism. This is in effect included in the nature of Christ's office as Mediator between God and man; and is evident from the whole tenor of Gospel instructions on that subject. It is evident, more particularly, from the Scriptures formerly cited to prove that the glory of God's perfections is the end of Christ's mediation and of our faith in him; and from other Scriptures which show, that by Christ we believe in God, who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God, 1 Pet. i. 21, that Christ is the way to the Father, John xiv. 6, that by him we draw near and have access to the Father through the Spirit, Eph. ii; 18, iii. 12; and that we are to do all things, and to ask all things, in his name, that the Father may be glorified in him, John xiv. 13; Col. iii. 17. There are some Scriptures which have a particular fitness to give us just conceptions of it, by giving us comprehensive views, both of the ultimate and of the more immediate object of faith; such as, the Scriptures which teach us to consider God as setting forth his Son to be the propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteous-

ness in the remission of sins. Rom. iii. 25, as God in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their trespasses, 2 Cor. v. 19, and to consider Christ as made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. These and the like Scriptures, teach us, in acknowledging Christ's mediation, to consider jointly the love and grace of the Father in sending, revealing, offering and giving his Son, and with him all things; and in a special manner the divine authority giving efficacy to his satisfaction and to all the parts of his mediatory undertaking.

The instructions which the gospel gives us concerning the characters and the means of true faith in Christ, are useful, not only for directing our first endeavours after that attainment, but also our endeavours after continuance and progress in it, and abundant lively exercise of it. It is a general direction, common to these with all other religious endeavours, that we should depend on the grace of the Spirit of God, who is called both the Spirit of Christ and of faith, in the diligent use of the means appointed by God. And as in all other cases, the great mean of inclining the heart to accept of any offer, is due consideration and impression of the necessity and of the worth and excellency of what is offered; so it is by impressions of that kind that cordial acceptance of the offers of the gospel is both produced and promoted.

IX. As to just impression of our need of the salvation revealed in the Gospel; a principal mean of it is that just apprehension of the hatefulness and danger of sin, which was explained at some length formerly. Though various things which show the evil of sin are in some measure evident from the light of nature, yet the Scripture gives far more abundant discoveries of these things: and the chief discovery it gives of the evil of sin

is in that same redemption by which we are delivered from it.

All the things that were formerly mentioned, as the just grounds of a sinner's sorrow and fears, are represented in Scripture, Isa. i. 2, 3; Rom. viii. 22; Jer. ii. 12, 13; Isa. xxiv. 19, 20, in that strong light that has the greatest energy in awakening the sinner's conscience, and in penetrating it with the deepest concern about deliverance from sin. Instructions of such a tendency are evidently suitable to the holiness and goodness of God, when he is making a revelation of mercy and grace to transgressors. When the great Sovereign and Lawgiver of the world offers to disobedient sinners the greatest blessings that could have rewarded the most perfect obedience it is suitable to the majesty and purity of his administration to make them sensible of their unworthiness of such blessings. It is suitable also to his goodness to sinners. It is a considerable part of the happiness of sinners to be duly sensible of their unworthiness of it. We are not truly delivered from sin and its worst effects, till we are delivered from pride and self-confidence. But the Scripture instructions, which are designed for awakening and alarming the sinner's conscience, are not designed for overwhelming him with sorrow or fear. They are designed to make him take sanctuary in that redemption, which gives a sufficient relief from all fears and sorrows, and is a satisfying foundation for the greatest hopes. Thus we are taught, that as by the law is the knowledge of sin, and as the law worketh wrath, or declares the danger of sin, so Christ is the end of the law for righteousness; the divine law shows our need of the redemption and grace revealed in the gospel; as, on the other hand, it is the end of the gospel to bring sinners

to conformity to the precepts of God's law, which is conformity to God himself.

X. Though just impression of the evil of sin be one principal means of due esteem and cordial acceptance of the blessings offered in the gospel; yet it is needful to take various other views of the worth and excellency of these blessings. The gospel not only promises deliverance from sin and from all evil; but the enjoyment of God the chief good, and of all true good in subserviency to that highest enjoyment. In order to due esteem of these promises, it is needful to have just impressions of the evil of sin, and also of the vanity of the world; between which things there is a near connection; seeing a main thing that shows the evil of alienation from God is the vanity of the things that are preferred to him.

The doctrine formerly insisted on concerning man's chief good or true happiness; namely, that God is both the author and the object of it, is a doctrine of natural religion; but it is proposed in revelation with peculiar advantages, and that in subserviency to a due esteem of the blessings of the covenant of grace. Thus, when the Holy Scripture describes true blessedness, it tells us, that the man is blessed whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, Psalm xxxii. 1; that God blesses sinners by turning them from their iniquities, Acts iii. 26; that he is blessed whom God chooses and causes to approach to him, and satisfies with the goodness of his house, Psal. lxv. 4; and that it is good for us to draw near to God, Psal. lxxiii. 28. As to the causes of this abundant blessedness, the Scripture teaches us, that God blesses us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places or things, in Christ Jesus, Eph. i. 3; that the gospel was preached to Abraham, when it was told him that in his

seed, that is, in Christ, should all the nations of the earth be blessed, Gal. iii. 8, 16, see Psalm lxxii.

It is a mean of producing due esteem of the blessedness in view, to abound in extensive meditation on the manifold benefits included in it, and particularly the benefits implied in the remission of sins, the justification of life, the adoption of children, the sanctification of our natures, access to God, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, the conduct of God's Spirit, the special care of his providence, and other benefits that are connected with these, and are promised in this life itself, together with the blessings promised in the life to come; at death perfection in holiness, passing immediately to glory; at the resurrection, the most complete glory and blessedness of soul and body to all eternity.

Whereas it is usual to distinguish betwixt the love of God himself and of his benefits, and sometimes the distinction is carried too far; it is proper to observe, that the principal benefits of God's covenant are the favour, the image, and the enjoyment of God himself. Hence it follows, that due esteem of God himself, is the source of due esteem of the salvation which the gospel offers to us, and which Christ has purchased for us. We cannot have just conceptions of the benefits of God's covenant, without considering them with relation to our glorifying and enjoying God himself. This is the view the Scripture gives of them. It represents this as the sum of the blessings of that covenant, that God, who is in himself so infinitely great and glorious, promises to be our God, and to make us his people. This implies such a happy interest in God's attributes and perfections, as the causes and objects of the soul's felicity and highest complacency, such a title to his everlasting favour, such an interest in his works, and providences, in the mediatory

offices of his Son, and the operations of his gracious Spirit, that the present joy and peace arising from the well-grounded hope of that interest in God, are most justly called joy unspeakable, and peace that passes all understanding.

It was observed formerly, that the favour of an infinite Being, and the blessedness connected with it, may be said to be grounds of infinite joy, if a finite soul were capable of it; and that, whereas these things cannot have a full and adequate effect on a finite subject, the proper effect of them is what is so excellently expressed, in Scripture style, by *filling the soul.* When the holy Scripture teaches us, that in Christ all fulness dwells, and that sinners receive out of his fulness grace for grace; that it is the end of the gospel that our joy may be full; that God fills men's hearts with joy and peace in believing; that he fills the longing soul with good things; that he fills men's souls, by the knowledge of the love of Christ, with all the fulness of God, Eph. iii. 19; the design of such Scriptures is not only to describe the fulness of joy and contentment that flows from an interest in Christ's mediation; but also to fill our souls with suitable esteem of it, and with that cordial acceptance of the offers and promises of the Gospel, which leads to an abundant hope of our interest in them.

Besides more general and comprehensive commendations of God's covenant and salvation, in the instructions of holy Scripture relating to particular promises, there is a peculiar excellency in them, both in style and sentiment, and a peculiar efficacy for raising due esteem of these inestimable blessings. Thus, for instance, in the promises of pardon, our gracious God vouchsafes to declare, that he will blot out our sins as clouds, and as a thick cloud our transgressions; that he will separate be-

twixt us and them, as far as east is from west; that he will cast them behind his back: that he will cast them into the depths of the sea; that he will wash and cleanse us from them, so as to make us white as the snow, yea, whiter than the snow; and that he will remember our sin no more; importing plainly, that redeemed sinners are brought into a state of as perfect peace and reconciliation with God, as though it were possible to forget that ever they had been sinners. The more any soul loves God, the more it must esteem such gracious promises; not only as they give relief from the just penal sanction of the divine law, but as they are transcendently amiable declarations of divine mercy and love.

But in considering the esteem we ought to have of the salvation offered in the Gospel, it is needful to consider more particularly, the importance of endeavouring after due esteem of holiness and sanctification. It is evident from Scripture, that we should esteem that great benefit not merely as a means of salvation, or merely as a part of it, but as that part of it to which all the other parts are subservient. This, as was formerly hinted, is necessarily included in the subserviency of all our enjoyments and comforts to our active glorifying of God. The worst of men may have some desire of deliverance from the punishment of sin, and some desire of the favour of God, as necessary to happiness. But it is the character of that faith which works by love, that it fixes men's hearts on deliverance, not only from the punishment of sin, but from sin itself; and excites, not merely a general desire of the favour of God as a means of happiness, but of the enjoyment of God himself, the image of God, and our active glorifying of God, as the principal effects of the favour of God, and the most valuable objects of desire.

As to the means of due esteem of holiness, a great part of the instructions of holy Scripture are subservient to that important attainment. This is the design of the amiable views which the Scripture gives of holiness as the image of God, the object of His approbation and complacency, the very thing by which we honour Him, and the necessary and chief part of the blessedness that consists in enjoying Him; as also of the Scripture commendations of the righteousness and manifold excellences of the law of God, and of the ways of obedience, as the ways of wisdom and liberty, of pleasantness and peace, and of everlasting joy and consolation.

High esteem of holiness, and of the other parts of the salvation which the Gospel offers to us, has a necessary connection with the things formerly explained, as included in divine love and in true repentance. The benefits of the covenant of grace are the principal objects of the desires included in the very nature of these holy dispositions. The favour, the image, the enjoyment of God, are the object of the chief desires included in divine love; deliverance from sin is the object of the chief desires which belong to the nature of repentance. All these desires meet with full satisfaction in the promises of the covenant of grace. It is therefore on good grounds that the Scripture teaches us, that that covenant is all our salvation, and should be all our desire.

XI. Cordial acceptance of the salvation offered in the Gospel, includes due esteem of the excellency, not only of the various parts, but also of the causes of that salvation, and particularly of Christ's redemption. If we should suppose a man to have a considerable esteem of the benefits of God's covenant, but at the same time to be unwilling to be indebted to divine mercy through the Mediator of that covenant; it is evident that he could

not be said to receive that Mediator, or to believe in Him with his whole heart. He could not be said to give due acceptation to the true and faithful saying, that is worthy of all acceptance, "That Jesus Christ came to save sinners;" or to "receive the love of the truth." It is evident, from the whole tenor of the Scripture doctrine of faith in Christ, that a main character of it is, a transcendent esteem and complacency of soul in Christ's redemption and mediation, as an amiable manifestation of the perfections of God in the salvation of sinners. As this esteem of redemption is of peculiar importance in Christian piety; it is proper to take a view of some of the chief proofs of the necessity of it, and the chief grounds and properties of it. The necessity of it is evident, from the Scripture account of the objects, the ends, and effects of faith, and from various other considerations.

As to the scriptures which treat of the objects of faith, it was proved before from the scriptures, that the faith in Christ, which the Gospel makes so necessary, includes acknowledgment of redemption. The same arguments prove the necessity of acknowledging the reality of redemption, and of due acknowledgment and impression of the excellency of it. There may be some speculative assent to the one, without suitable persuasion and esteem of the other; as with respect to the belief of providence, where there is secret murmuring against it, it proves at once some belief of the reality of providence, and want of due persuasion of the perfect righteousness of it. We do not honour God by acknowledging merely the reality of any divine works or actions, whether in providence or redemption, without acknowledging also the excellency of them. Disesteem of any divine work or action, implies a disesteem of God himself.

Without acknowledging the glory of redemption, we

do not acknowledge the chief things the Gospel reveals concerning it, yea, we neglect a chief end of the Gospel. All the Scripture commendations of that way of salvation, may justly be considered as so many precepts, requiring us to endeavour due esteem and just impressions of it. As these commendations are of various sorts, the design of them all is to promote due esteem of what they so much extol. While some scriptures commend redemption as an amiable display of the divine perfections in general; other scriptures condescend on the particular perfections that shine in it with peculiar lustre. Of the first sort are the scriptures which speak of our beholding the glory of God—of God in the light of New Testament revelation, 2 Cor. iii. 18; of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6; of the Gospel's being sent to make known the riches of the glory of the mystery of salvation; with respect to which, it is said of such as have due impressions of it, that Christ is in them the hope of glory, Col. i. 27.

Of the second sort are the scriptures which commend redemption as manifesting the glory of God's justice, power and wisdom; but especially of His infinite mercy and love. Thus we are taught, that by the propitiation in Christ's blood, God declares His righteousness in the remission of sins; so that He may be just, and the justifier of the sinner that believeth in Jesus, Rom. iii. 25, 26, 31, that thus the divine law, instead of being made void, is established; that to them who are called, Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. i. 14, that it is in this God commends His love to us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, Rom. v. 8, that it is in His kindness in Christ, that He shows forth the exceeding riches of His grace; that this is that rich mercy, and that great love, wherewith He

loved us, Eph. ii. 4, 7, that it is love, whose height, depth, length, and breadth surpass our knowledge, Eph. iii. 18, 19.

As to the Scriptures which treat of the ends of faith, it was proved before, from these scriptures, that the end of our acknowledging redemption, is our glorifying God's perfections manifested in it, which necessarily implies sincere and cordial esteem of it. The scriptures which give the characters of such as have true faith in Christ, teach us, that though Christ crucified is to many others a stone of stumbling, to them He is precious, or honourable, 1 Pet. ii. 7, and, as in the passage above cited, to them He is the power and the wisdom of God. The Scriptures which show the superlative esteem the apostles had of redemption, should be considered, not only as descriptions of their faith and love, but also as containing the patterns of ours. The apostle Paul says, in scriptures formerly cited, that he gloried in nothing else, save in the cross of Christ; that he was determined to know nothing else; that he counted all things else as loss for the excellency of that knowledge.

It is one of the most remarkable short descriptions that we have in all the Scriptures of the Christian life when the apostle Paul tells us, in a scripture cited under a former head, "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. As it is evident from the context, that it is the glory of God in redemption that the apostle has in view; so his expressions plainly import, that that glory should be the object of a Christian's transcendent esteem and habitual contemplation; and that this is a main thing belonging to a life of faith in the Son of God. It is indeed one of the best views we can take of a life

of faith working by love; that is, faith first working love to God, and thereby producing conformity to Him in His moral and imitable excellences. It shows the affinity between the life of faith here, and the heavenly life hereafter, which the apostle John describes by attaining to likeness to the Lord, in seeing Him as he is. When the apostle says, that they who truly believe in Christ, behold the glory of the Lord, and are changed, as by the Spirit of the Lord; it implies, that it is a main design of the work of the Spirit of God to produce just esteem of our redemption by the Son of God.

The same thing is implied in various scriptures concerning divine enlightening grace, the principal cause of true faith; which scriptures show that it is the great design of such operations of grace, to give us "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and to enlighten the eyes of our understanding in the knowledge of Him. To all which we may add a farther proof of the point in view, from the account which the Old Testament prophets give of the chief causes of the joy and gladness of the gospel church. When these prophets are describing the flourishing condition of the converted Gentiles, they say, that nations which were once as a wilderness, shall bud and blossom as the rose, and shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice, even with joy and singing, Isa. xxxv. 2, and sing in the ways of the Lord, Psal. cxxxviii. 5. What they assign as the cause of all this joy is, that these people shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God; and that they would sing in God's ways, because great is the glory of the Lord. Seeing these scriptures speak of the joy that would be the effect of the gospel, they must be understood as meant of the glory of God in that divine work

which is the chief subject of the gospel; without excluding the discoveries of God's glory in His other works.

The scriptures which show the necessity of high esteem of redemption, explain the grounds of that esteem. They show that we ought to esteem it as an amiable manifestation of God's perfections, and particularly of His justice and mercy.

XII. It requires particular consideration, that the discovery which redemption gives of God's holiness and justice, and which is with many a ground of prejudice against it, is in reality a principal ground of holy esteem of it, and should be improved for that end. Due regard to the authority of a just law, is an amiable quality in a governor or judge. The mercy of a judge, when exercised at the expense of his justice, must indeed be the object of a transgressor's joy, because it gives deliverance from punishment; yet this cannot make it the object of his just esteem. In order to such esteem, it is needful that mercy be exercised consistently with justice. Such a consistency gives a heart that loves justice a noble delight, different from what arises merely from escaping just punishment. This is evidently the case in remission through redemption. That divine work gives a discovery of God's justice, in the cause of remission of sins, beyond what could have resulted from the punishment of sinners themselves. Had God given a revelation of mercy without revealing an atonement, we would have been obliged in that case, to believe God's righteousness, in that and in all His other administrations. But then they who love God and His law, would have wanted the noble enjoyment that results from so bright a display of these divine attributes, which support the authority of the divine law. That discovery of the glory of God and of His law, heightens the enjoyments of the conscience in

the remission of sins. It has the like effect on all the other parts of salvation and happiness. Gifts that are ever so desirable in themselves, receive an additional worth, by being bestowed in such a way as manifests the moral excellences of the benefactor.

High esteem of redemption, as it honours God's law and justice, has an evident connection with the good dispositions which were formerly explained as belonging to the nature of divine love and of true repentance for sin. It was observed, as to the nature of divine love, that it includes sincere complacency in all manifestations of God's perfections, and particularly of His moral perfections in his moral law and government; and as to the nature of repentance, that though God's law and justice are the grounds of a sinner's fear, they must be the objects of a penitent's esteem. It is indeed obvious that, without a revelation of mercy, this would be attended with difficulty. It would be difficult for a sinner heartily to love and esteem the things that seem to oppose his safety, and to make his punishment necessary; yet it cannot be denied, but that a transgressor of God's righteous law would be obliged to this. A sinner is not obliged to true repentance, if he is not obliged to love God and his law; which cannot be done, without honouring that righteousness of God's administration which supports the authority of his law. Redemption dispels the perplexities which such obligations might produce in the mind of a penitent. As it reconciles divine mercy and justice in our salvation, it reconciles the penitent's regard to the authority of God's law, and his regard to his own safety and impunity. All the things which convince the penitent, that the authority of God's moral law is of the greatest importance, convince him likewise, that Christ's mediation is unspeakably glorious; and there is a strong

connexion between due regard to the one and profound esteem of the other.

In explaining repentance, it was observed, that a sinner is not a true penitent, unless he both hate sin and love repentance. True repentance inclines a sinner powerfully to due humiliation of soul for sin before God. It makes him love the proper means of so just self-abasement. Redemption contains the most powerful motives to so happy a disposition. Acknowledgment of redemption implies the actual exercise of it. It contains the most effectual inducements for reconciling the heart to it. For what can more effectually reconcile the heart of a sinner to due humiliation for sin, than to remember habitually, how the Lord of glory humbled hinself to the death, to bear the desert of sin? leaving us nothing that relates to that punishment, but such acknowledgment of our deserving it, as is needful to make us prize the undeserved mercy that delivers us from it. Thus, when we compare together the excellent properties of redemption, and the characters of repentance, it is evident, that repentance makes a sinner esteem redemption for the same reasons for which the impenitent are so unjustly prejudiced against it; namely, because it honours the law and justice of God, and humbles the sinner, excluding boasting, and allowing no flesh to glory in God's sight. Repentance produces that situation of mind in which a sinner discerns a complicated excellency, not only in redemption itself, but also in the appointed means of partaking of it; and particularly in the way of access to God by habitual acknowledgment of it. By that way of access to God, a sinner draws near to the throne of the Most High, with deep self-abasement, without discouragement; and with what the holy Scripture calls boldness and confidence, without presumption: the

same things that are grounds of the sinner's hope and confidence being the chief motives of his self-abasement, as being the chief discoveries of the evil of sin, and of God's just hatred of sin, as well as of His mercy to sinners. These things show in part, how redemption, while it humbles the sinner in respect of self-abasement, which is so desirable and even so honourable a disposition in a sinner, in other respects exalts him to inestimable dignity and promotion.

What has been said shows the necessity of honouring redemption, as it manifests God's justice. But this cannot be done aright without considering the effects of justice as subservient to the designs of mercy. Justice manifested in redemption is justice or righteousness in a propitiation designed for the remission of sins, Rom. iii. 25. It is justice inflicting the punishment due to sin, in order to the salvation and happiness of sinners. The divine perfection, therefore, that shines with distinguished and super-eminent lustre in redemption, is infinite mercy. It is on that amiable perfection that faith in Christ must fix the sinner's highest esteem, his hope and his joy.

The Scripture commendations of the love of God to sinners, lay more stress on God's giving his Son, than on his giving heaven. "God commends his love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life," Rom. v. 8, 10. "He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him also, freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. It was observed above, that there is an incomprehensible greatness in the blessings of God's covenant, the fruits and purchase of redemption, which

must fill the heart of an attentive penitent with wonder aud admiration. Such Scriptures as these now cited, show that our admiration of the fruits of redemption should be, as it were, swallowed up in superior admiration of redemption itself; that this is so transcendent a mystery, or wonder of mercy, as eclipses all other wonders; that as God's mercies are above all His other works, this is above all His other mercies; that after God's giving his Son, comparatively speaking, it is not so great a wonder that He should give all things; that it would rather be a wonder if he should withhold any thing. "How will he not, with Him also, freely give us all things? Much more shall we be saved by his life." Abstracting from redemption, we cannot conceive any effect of infinite goodness, but what might possibly be surpassed by some other effect of the same amiable attribute. It could not have entered into the heart of man to conceive any thing that could manifest divine mercy, as it were, to the uttermost. Such is the manifestation given of it in redemption. No wonder therefore that it is commended as a mystery of love, whose height, and depth, length and breadth, passes knowledge; and that in order to just impressions of it, we are directed to seek the Spirit of God to strengthen us with might in the inner man, and to shine into our hearts.

It is evident, from what has been said, that in order to due esteem of redemption, we should consider it not only as an excellent discovery of the divine perfections, particularly of those above-mentioned, but also transcending all other known or conceivable discoveries of them. To set this in its true light, it is proper to observe, that though God's attributes are always the same, the manifestations and effects of them are not equally glorious. It is suitable to the nature and excellency of these attri-

butes, that there should be a variety of orders and degrees of perfection in the effects of them. The least pile of grass gives some discovery of the same boundless power and wisdom that are manifested in the stupendous frame of the whole universe. But there is a vast disparity and inequality betwixt the manifestations which so unequal effects give of the same perfections of the same cause. In like manner, God's infinite goodness is manifested in every gift he bestows; and his justice in every punishment he inflicts. But there is a great disparity in different effects of the same supreme goodness and justice. Redemption is the highest conceivable effect and manifestation of both. It is the chief punishment ever justice inflicted, the chief gift ever mercy bestowed.

In this complicated display of divine glory, mercy has the ascendant and pre-eminence; justice is subservient to it; and supreme wisdom is glorified in the joint display of both these perfections, in the same divine work. The same wisdom appears in the manifold subserviency of redemption to a variety of noble purposes, its efficacy and influence on all the parts of holiness and happiness; and particularly its efficacy on the consciences of sinners, as a satisfying relief from the greatest fears, and strong foundation of the greatest hopes.

XIII. The efficacy of redemption in giving relief from the sorrows and fears that are the effects of guilt, is a thing much insisted on in holy Scripture; and due improvement of it is a chief branch of the practical acknowledgment of Christ's mediation. This relieving efficacy of redemption, as it may justly be called, is a main thing intended in the Scriptures concerning the virtue of Christ's blood, in sprinkling men's hearts from an evil conscience, Heb. x. 32, in purging their consciences from dead works, Heb. ix. 14, in making the souls of them who

believe to enter into rest, Heb. iv. 3, and in the scriptures which speak of the Redeemer as a sanctuary, Isa. viii. 14, and a hope set before us to which we are to flee for refuge, Heb. vi. 18.

For explaining this branch of the efficacy of redemption, it is needful to have in view the principles formerly laid down, concerning the grounds of a sinner's fear, and the impression they must make on the heart of a penitent. All the things that show the hatefulness and danger of sin, are the just grounds of a sinner's sorrow and fear: such as, all the grounds of obedience to the divine law; all the obligations to it; all the evidences of the excellency of that law, and of the importance of its authority, and of the reality of its penal sanction; all the aggravations of sin, and declarations of God's just hatred of it, with various other things which were formerly mentioned. As these things are exceeding evident from the clearest principles of natural conscience, and level to the meanest capacities; so all the calamities of life, and bitter fruits of sin, tend to put sinners in mind of these things, and, as it were, to force attention to them.

But what we are particularly to consider is, that it is a main thing that belongs to the nature of true repentance, to remember these things, and to be suitably affected with them. Though others may sometimes find an easy relief from these grounds of fear, by the various artifices that are means of stupifying the conscience, such relief is inconsistent with the character and dispositions of a true penitent. Sincere repentance must incline the penitent to consider all the things which show the hatefulness of sin, which are at the same time all of them evidences of the danger of it, and must be considered by him in that view: otherwise he does not consider himself, as he ought, as a subject of the divine govern-

ment, a transgressor of the divine law, and consequently of himself obnoxious to its righteous penal sanction. When a sinner's conscience is duly awakened, these grounds of sorrow and fear will not be the objects of his mere speculative belief, or superficial consideration; but the awful greatness and importance of them must make the deepest impression on his soul.

It is evident, that to a conscience thus penetrated with the most just grounds of the greatest sorrow and fear, nothing can be more desirable than a suitable and satisfying relief. Such is the relief which redemption affords. It is, as was proved before, a manifestation of the justice of God in the remission of sins, beyond what could have resulted from the punishment of sinners themselves. When therefore a sinner's conscience finds sufficient ground for believing and relying on that redemption, it is enabled to triumph over all its fears. The divine law and justice are grounds of terror no more. *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.* Yea, things that were the grounds of fear become now arguments of hope. Even justice and righteousness are grounds of hope and pleading for the remission of sin, when a sinner takes sanctuary in the redemption destined and appointed for that end.

It may be objected, that the relief arising from faith in redemption is superfluous; because the relief arising from promises of pardon, though without any revelation of an atonement, would be sufficient. In answering this objection, it must be owned, that such promises would found an indispensable obligation to assent, joined with implicit acknowledgment of the consistency of God's mercy and justice, in bestowing the thing promised. But all this does not make the above-mentioned relief arising from redemption superfluous. In order to make

this evident, it is useful to consider some important truths concerning the nature and properties of guilt, which are evident both from Scripture and experience, and show the manifold suitableness of the gospel mystery of salvation to the exigencies of a sinner's conscience.

Guilt is the most perplexing thing in the world. The native effect of it is, dread of punishment from the Sovereign of the world. That dread is far from being groundless. The above-mentioned principles of natural conscience, concerning the grounds of a sinner's fear, are principles, the evidence of which is exceeding strong and efficacious where it is duly attended to. It is attended to by the awakened conscience, so as to make deep impression.

It is therefore a source of perplexing objections against any offer of mercy and happiness to transgressors of God's law, which does not appear evidently suitable to the authority of that law, and the glorious regard that God has to it. This shows that it is the native tendency of the guilt of sin, to produce perplexities which need the most abundant and most satisfying evidence to dispel them. In this, as well as in other cases, that is the most satisfying evidence, which not only contains positive proof, but directly solves perplexing difficulties. Even in matters of mere speculation, perplexing difficulties hinder the efficacy of positive evidence. But there is a great disparity betwixt the efficacy of evidence in mere speculations, and in things in which men's greatest hopes or fears are deeply interested. The greater the difficulties are that appear opposite to our hopes in any thing of importance, the greater is the anxiety of the soul to get them removed, or to get a satisfying answer to them. Nothing is more suitable to the exigencies of an awakened conscience, than a satisfying

answer to the difficulties that oppose the hope of remission and salvation. Redemption gives a satisfying answer to them all.

If guilt is a fruitful source of perplexity in the awakened conscience, redemption is still a more fruitful source of satisfying relief and refreshing consolation. It is from this rich source the awakened sinner draws sufficient answers to the accusations of the divine righteous law and of his own conscience. It is here that he finds abundant arguments of hope and pleading, in addressing the tribunal of God for remission and for all other blessings. Through Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than the blood of Abel, we come with humble hope and confidence to God the judge of all, Heb. xii. 23, 24.

The relieving efficacy of redemption, in its influence on the hope and comfort of pardon, will be made farther evident afterwards, in considering the means of just impression of the Divine promises. It was needful to take some view of it here, in considering the grounds of esteem of Christ's mediation. In order to just views of these grounds, it is useful to consider the influence of redemption, not only on the hope of pardon, but also on the other branches of the Christian hope. The hope of pardon, or mere impunity, is but a part of that hope; it is but a part of the hope that is needful in order to abundant peace of conscience, and the full contentment of the heart that loves God. Such contentment requires the well-founded hope not only of remission, but of the heavenly blessedness, and all the other above-mentioned blessings of the covenant of grace. There is an incomprehensible greatness in these objects of hope, which strengthens the difficulties that arise from the sinner's grounds of sorrow and fear. When he considers duly

the infinite greatness and majesty of the true and living God, the unspeakable blessedness and high dignity of an interest in that God as his God, and of the full and perpetual enjoyment of Him; he must see that so great a superstructure of hope requires a great foundation of proportionable strength to support it. A sinner is not a true penitent, if he imagine such a foundation in himself. A sinner blinded by self-flattery, and swelled with the pride of impenitence, may more easily hope for any thing, because in effect he imagines every thing due to him. However little such a one considers the obligations he is under to God, he scarcely sets bounds to his secret pretensions about what he imagines God is obliged to do for him. The very reverse of all this is the view of things that occupies the mind of a sinner whose conscience is duly awakened. While the hatefulness and guilt of sin discourages him; while God's law and justice alarm him; and even God's goodness to him justly appears to him as an unspeakable aggravation of his guilt; the incomprehensible greatness of the blessings of God's covenant, and particularly of the heavenly blessedness, astonishes and amazes him. The more glorious that blessedness appears in itself, the more it appears contrary to his deserving, and the greater difficulty he finds to reconcile the hope of it with just impressions of God's greatness and holiness, and of his own meanness and guilt. The more he loves God, the more he must desire that blessedness, and abundant well-founded hope of it. The more he desires that hope, the deeper must his concern be about the things that seem to stand in the way of it. Nothing can be more desirable to a conscience in such a situation, than a suitable relief from such difficulties, and a satisfying foundation of so great hopes. Redemption affords such a relief from fears, and

such a foundation of hope, as the conscience of a sinner wants. It affords arguments for hope, of far superior efficacy to all the grounds for discouragement and hindrances of hope that can perplex the most anxious mind. This it does, not only as it is a full satisfaction to divine justice, but also as it is an incomparable gift of divine mercy. This is evident from the Scripture commendations of divine love in redemption, in the passages formerly cited. It was observed that these passages commend redemption, not only as a very great display and effect of divine love, but as surpassing all other effects of it that can possibly be conceived; and that there is more stress laid on God's love in giving His Son, than in giving heaven itself. Were it suitable to the rules of human justice and government, that a sovereign should rescue rebels from the sanction of his law by the death of his son; his giving his son to die for such people while enemies, would be a more wonderful act of mercy, than his receiving them into his palace, when returned to their allegiance. It is by reasonings of this kind that the Scriptures inculcate the pre-eminence of redemption, Rom. v. 7, 8, 9. Nor are these reasonings insisted on merely as inducements to divine love, though that indeed is a chief end and use of them; but also as encouragements of Christian hope. The incomprehensible greatness of the blessings of God's covenant, produces an admiration that tends of itself to hinder hope. The mysterious mercy manifested in the Mediator of the covenant, produces superior admiration of a different kind, that tends to strengthen hope, and to make difficulties vanish. In relying on redemption, a sinner finds the strongest encouragement to hope for the greatest blessings he can ask or think of; because he finds God

has given abundantly above all we can ask or think already, Eph. iii. 20.

XIV. In considering the grounds of due esteem of redemption, it is fit to observe, that as it is a satisfying foundation for supporting the hope of the greatest happiness, so the transcendent manifestation it gives of the glory of God, is a new additional ingredient of happiness of inestimable value and importance. This is evident from Scriptures, formerly cited, to prove, that the glory of God in Christ's mediation is a source of abundant joy to redeemed sinners. It was observed before, that the manifestations of the perfections of God, are the objective causes of the happiness of His creatures; as also, that though these perfections are always the same, the manifestations of them are not all equally glorious; and that the manifestation of them in redemption is of eminent excellency. Hence it follows, that it must be an eminent objective cause of the happiness of all who love God. No wonder the Scriptures speak of it as attracting the attention and admiration of the most exalted intelligences. It tells us that the things relating to our redemption, are "things which the angels desire to look into," 1 Peter i. 12, and by which "the manifold wisdom of God is made known to principalities and powers in heavenly places," Eph. iii. 10. They are things which have a peculiar fitness to inspire the universe with the purest and most delightful admiration of God's moral perfections, and especially of His infinite mercy and love. But they must chiefly be additional ingredients of happiness, to those who are chiefly concerned in them, that is, to redeemed sinners. Redemption must give a peculiar eternal enjoyment to them, not only because it is so eminent a manifestation of the glory of that God whom they love with their whole hearts, but because it is a manifestation of His glory in the effects of His love to themselves.

The discovery given of God's glory in that Divine work, is not only a considerable additional part of the happiness of the redeemed, but has a manifold tendency to heighten the enjoyment of all the other parts of it. All the parts of our salvation are in themselves unspeakably desirable. They have an intrinsic worth and excellency in them, to which our esteem never bears a full proportion. But, notwithstanding of this, the manner in which they are purchased and bestowed, gives an additional lustre, or, as it were, an additional sweetness to their intrinsic worth. This is evident from the excellences of redemption that were considered above. It was observed, that it heightens the enjoyment of the conscience, in the comforts of pardon, that it is purchased and bestowed in so glorious a way; a way that equally honours God's justice and mercy, and equally secures the authority of the Divine law, and the safety of the transgressor; and that the most valuable gifts have an additional dignity in them, when given in such a way as honours the moral excellence of the benefactor. The Redeemer's sacrifice, which, in Scripture style, is called a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, does as it were perfume His purchase with the incense of infinite merit and love; and the savour of eternal mercy heightens the soul's complacency in all the parts of it.

XV. In considering the nature and grounds of due esteem of redemption, it is needful to consider, not only Christ's oblation, by which redemption is purchased, but also His intercession, which is a principal cause of the application of it. Though our knowledge of this, as well as of other mysteries, whether of nature or grace, is very imperfect in our present state, yet what may be known of it, shows its manifold suitableness to the exigencies of our conscience, and ought to attract our highest esteem.

This branch of Christ's mediation is variously expressed in Scripture; particularly by His appearing before God for us, Heb. ix. 24, His being our advocate with the Father, 1 John ii. 1, His standing at the golden altar before the throne of God, to offer up, with much incense, the prayers of those who come to God by him, Rev. viii. 3; Heb. vii. 25, as also by the efficacious pleading of His blood, as the blood of sprinkling which speaks better things than the blood of Abel, Heb. xii. 24, and by His praying to the Father for us, John xiv. 16, xvii., though we must still remember the great disparity betwixt this and all other addresses that are called prayer. These, and the like Scriptures, give that knowledge of the nature of Christ's intercession that is needful in order to practical acknowledgment and improvement of it. They show, that Christ's intercession is founded graciously on his oblation; and that as, in his oblation, He willed the expiation of our sins, by His bearing the punishment of them, and atoning Divine justice for them; so, in His intercession, he continually wills the application of that atonement, and the actual communication of the fruits of it to sinners. It is evident also, that His willing these things does not resemble the petition of a supplicant, but the address of one who claims his right; and that this interposition of the Mediator in heaven, in the right and virtue of His oblation on earth, is an appointed intermediate cause of our access and acceptance with God, and of the whole of our salvation.

The necessity of practical acknowledgment of Christ's intercession is implied in the Scriptures which describe the nature and ends of it, and is much insisted on in other Scriptures, particularly in the Scriptures which teach us that we should improve Christ's intercession, as a ground of humble triumph over the fears of condem-

nation, Rom. viii. 34, that we should consider Christ as the High Priest of our profession, Heb. iii. 1, that we should consider Him as the High Priest over the house of God, Heb. x. 21, as our great, faithful, merciful, and compassionate High Priest, whose sufferings, in expiating our sins, fitted his human nature for the most perfect, that is, experimental sympathy with us in our distresses, Heb. iv. 14; ii. 17, 18.

As to the ends of considering and acknowledging Christ's intercession, these Scriptures show that thereby we come boldly to the throne of grace, Heb. iv. 16, which must be meant, as is evident, of an abundant hope that should be joined with the deepest reverence and humility, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need; that our hope may be as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil, Heb. vi. 19, that we may have boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; that we may draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, Heb. x. 19, &c. It is a principal design of the whole epistle to the Hebrews to commend the distinguishing excellences of New Testament ordinances and privileges, as resulting from the distinguishing excellences of Christ's priesthood, both as to His sacrifice and continual intercession.

In order to due esteem of Christ's intercession, it is needful to guard against unreasonable mistakes concerning it, as if it were unsuitable to the glory of Christ's person or of his exalted state. Though men, when exalted to high dignity, ofttimes forget their inferiors, who were formerly the objects of their affection and friend-

ship, we should not harbour such apprehensions concerning him who is exalted in being gracious, and whose loving-kindness is everlasting. As it is not inconsistent with the glory of the Creator to be employed in acts of goodness and power, respecting the lowest order of animals, Psal. cxlv. 15, it would be unreasonable to think it unsuitable to the glory of the Mediator, to be employed in acts of mercy and condescension relating to the highest concerns of immortal souls. In treating on Christ's exalted state, some have distinguished two things belonging to it, abstracting from what they term Christ's Divine life, or the life of his Divine nature; namely, his life of glory, and his mediatory life: the one consisting in the peculiar felicity of his human nature, flowing from the personal union, and the fullest fruition of God; the other consisting in the most excellent acts of condescension for the salvation of men. It is evident that these things are perfectly consistent, and the second of them no way interferes with the first. It is the nature of the most perfect goodness, to take the greatest delight in the most perfect beneficence.

As Christ's intercession should not be imagined to be unsuitable to His exalted state, neither should it be reckoned superfluous, as to the salvation of sinners, because it cannot be designed to work any change on God. That argument, were it good, would hold equally against all other subordinate causes or means of salvation, as well as Christ's intercession, as superfluous; seeing the production of a change on God is not the design of any of them. Christ's intercession is not the cause of God's love or good-will to sinners; it is the effect of it: but so also is Christ's sacrifice. What vindicates the one, vindicates also the other, from the imputation of being superfluous. Both these parts of Christ's mediation, though

they are not the causes of God's love, yet are causes of our salvation. They are intermediate and subordinate causes, by which the love of God produces its effects on transgressors of His law, suitably to the glory of His justice and holiness.

Both Christ's sacrifice and intercession are manifestations of these adorable perfections. Though His intercession is not that which satisfies the justice of God, it is a most real, eminent, and continual declaration of it. For next to Christ's sacrifice, what could give a greater declaration of God's just hatred of sin, than so holy a constitution, that none of the blessings of God's covenant are bestowed on sinners, but by the actual interposition of Him who made atonement for their sins? It may perhaps give some light to this subject, to consider the distinction, mentioned by some, betwixt real and verbal declarations of the divine perfections. Though God had not displayed the greatness of His power by so real and amazing an effect of it as the creation of the universe, but had only created a few rational creatures, He could have given them a verbal declaration or revelation of the greatness of His power, which would have been an indispensable obligation to believe it. But this is far from proving the real declaration of the greatness of God's power, and other attributes, to be superfluous. It is suitable to the honour of God, and the good of His rational creatures, that they should have something else than mere evidences of the reality of His perfections. Declarations of the greatness of them, by real effects or divine works, are worthy of God; as they are not only means of belief of His attributes, but of producing the strongest impressions of them, and as they afford abundant and most desirable materials of contemplation in adoring them. Though there were no such thing as Christ's interces-

sion, we would be obliged to believe the holiness and justice of God; and that our salvation was the purchase of Christ's blood. We would be obliged to believe these things, because of the declarations made of them in God's word. But Christ's intercession is a transcendent, real, durable declaration of them; highly subservient to the ends of His sacrifice; fit to produce the strongest impressions; and to inspire God's immense kingdom with the highest thoughts of the righteousness of His government, and of the purity of His administration, as well as of the riches of His grace. It is a lasting declaration, that the blessings which the Sovereign Ruler of the world bestows on transgressors of His law, is through that propitiation that magnifies His law to the uttermost. It promotes the honour of divine justice, and of the atonement that satisfied it, that that satisfaction is for ever pleaded on by the Redeemer himself in heaven, and by the whole company of the redeemed on earth, through all ages. Whereas the declaration of the righteousness and holiness of God in Christ's oblation, behoved to be transient; a durable and continual declaration of these things in Christ's intercession, is suitable to the continual need of pardoning mercy, in order to friendly intercourse between heaven and earth, through all the ages of the imperfect state of the Church.

What has been said for removing prejudices against Christ's intercession, shows the grounds of due esteem and honourable acknowledgment of it. The same principles and motives dispose the heart to esteem His sacrifice, and His intercession founded on it. Both are eminent manifestations of the same Divine perfections; and both are subservient to the same excellent purposes. Love and gratitude to the Redeemer should produce holy complacency in His intercession, as that puts eternal

honour on His oblation; being a continual representation and remembrance of it, for the most noble purposes, in the place where God gives the brightest displays of His glory. It should also be the object of our complacency, as it is a continual effect of the same love of Christ that He manifested in bearing our sins on the cursed tree. On all these accounts, it has a powerful influence on all the good dispositions formerly mentioned as effects of Christ's oblation; and particularly in the duties of gospel worship, which, when done in sincerity, have so great efficacy on the other parts of the Christian life.

As the highest heaven, the seat of the blessed, is the the place where the mediatory administration in view is performed: so it is of great importance in practical religion, to remember habitually, not only God's essential presence, which fills the universe; but also His glorious special presence, which fills that high and holy place, on account of which it is called His holy temple, and the habitation of His holiness and of His glory. It is evident, from Scripture and reason, that it is exceeding useful to us to have our hearts, our affections, and our conversation, in heaven; to have our eye on that blessedness as the purchase of redemption, as a great effect of Divine love, and as the object of our highest hopes; and particularly that it is of importance, in our immediate addresses to God, to elevate our minds and hearts to the place which His word calls His habitation and His throne, where He gives the greatest displays of His authority, of His glory, and of His favour.

Christ's intercession has powerful attractions to engage sinners to delight in lifting up their hearts heavenwards, to God's throne of grace, in the duties of His worship. If a sinner have a due concern about access to God, it tends to inspire his soul with ineffable cheerfulness, when,

in lifting up his guilty face to the throne of God, he fixes the eye of faith on the glorious things that are doing there in the behalf of sinners; and that for this very end, that even they may have boldness to draw near to God. As these things tend to incline and encourage the heart to immediate worship, so they have a powerful influence on all the good dispositions that are suitable to it, such as humility and reverence, Divine love, hope and joy. Christ's intercession promotes that humility, that results from a true sense of sin, because it is a representation of that costly atonement by which it was expiated. It promotes reverence and veneration of God's greatness, because it is an eminent display of His authority and majesty in the moral government of the world. It tends to heighten that reverential frame of soul, when a sinner considers that he is to offer up addresses which he expects will be seconded by so glorious an intercession. But it is needful that veneration of God's majesty be mixed with humble confidence in His mercy. It is also needful that deep self-abasement for sin do not degenerate into servile terror, and that mistrust of God, which alienates the heart from Him and dishonours His mercy. It is needful that due self-annihilation be tempered with the hope of mercy and acceptance, founded on the grounds of hope which God has laid before us; and with that Divine love and joy to which hope is so subservient. Christ's intercession has a peculiar fitness to produce so happy a temperament. It qualifies profound reverence and self-abasement with triumphant hope and confidence, and with abundant love and joy. Its influence on so desirable effects, is evident from the Scriptures formerly cited, to show the nature and the ends of it. They show that Christ's intercession, in conjunction with His oblation, on which it is founded, is the ground of humble triumph

over the fears of condemnation; the ground of access to God with holy confidence and boldness; the encouragement to draw near to God, and to enter into the holiest of all, with full assurance of faith; that it is the support of the soul against the fears arising from former guilt, or the imperfections of present duties; and that it is the sure hold on which the anchor of hope fixes with steadiness, entering into that within the veil. It tends to replenish the soul that loves God, with the most useful elevated affections and the purest consolations, in looking upwards to the throne of God, to look to it as a throne of grace, a mercy-seat, where we have so great and so merciful a High Priest, administering for us in the tabernacle not made with hands; with the names of his people on his breastplate, even on his heart; his efficacious blood continually speaking and pleading for the communication of its purchase to sinners.

ON THE

PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE MESSIAH.

PREFATORY NOTE.

This treatise of Maclaurin, however important and valuable, was not intended to be a full and formal discussion of the whole scheme of prophecy, though most of the predictions in Scripture are mentioned in it,—all of them grouped and arranged on certain definite principles of relation to Christ, as the great subject of all revelation. The reader, too, would be equally disappointed, if he addressed himself to the perusal of the work, in the expectation of finding in it critical and exegetical inquiries into those passages of Old Testament Scripture, in which allusion may be found, or supposed to be found to the first advent of the Saviour. On the other hand, it would be an error to imagine that the tenor of investigation so closely relates to Christ that no space is left for collateral and kindred inquiries. We might adduce the lengthened and conclusive reasonings, which as it seems to us settle the point whether the doctrine of a future state, and of the soul's immortality, was revealed under the past dispensation, and formed an article in the creed of the ancient Jewish church. This Essay on the Prophecies, though published posthumously in 1773, is said to have been written in 1736, and the denial that a future state was revealed in the Old Testament appears to have been a common and prevailing argument among the Freethinkers of the time, for Warburton's "Divine Legation of Moses," published two years afterward, was based upon this argument. Warburton esteemed it of such importance, that upon the alleged omission of such a doctrine in earlier revelation, he reared a pile of elaborate but unsatisfactory reasoning, which served to prove little more than his own singular genius and learning. Maclaurin, with more sagacious insight into the scope of Scripture, in a few pages of dense and pregnant thought, proves not only that the doctrine of a future state was revealed to the Hebrew church, but that the whole revelation they enjoyed would be meaningless without it.

The special subject with which our author deals in this treatise is prophecy in relation to Christ. There are four controversies in connection with which the predictions in Scripture regarding him are of the highest importance. It may serve to define the object of the following work if we briefly advert to them.

In opposition to *infidelity*, the argument from the fulfilment of prophecy has been urged sometimes with special fulness, almost to the neglect and disparagement of other branches of the Christian evidences. Whatever reaction may have ensued from this circumstance, the power and validity of the reason for the hope that is in us, supplied from fulfilled prediction, cannot be questioned. It has been denominated "the growing evidence" for Christianity, events as they transpire in accordance with the intimations of prophecy supplying cumulative proof of its divine origin and character. The discussions in the following treatise do not necessarily exclude this inference from the accomplishment of prophecy. On the contrary, they afford very striking illustrations of its soundness. But had this been all the author intended, greater space in the work would have been devoted to the historical confirmation of the fulfilment which inspired predictions are thought to have received. Perhaps, too, there would have been a fuller exposition of some of the more important prophecies referred to in the course of the treatise.

Again, the prophecies become important in dealing *with the Jews*. There was a time, shortly after the Reformation, when considerable attention was devoted to the Jewish objections against the Christian system. The Jews of that age could boast of some authors deserving of respect for learning and ability, while among the Reformers generally the knowledge of Hebrew for a time did not prevail very extensively. Great deference in these circumstances was paid to the Rabbis. Serious consideration was given to the grounds on which they set aside the Christian interpretation of the prophecies from which the claims of Christ as the true Messiah have been established. In one of his preliminary dissertations to his exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Owen reviews the prophecies respecting Christ, specially rebutting the pleas by which the Jews endeavoured to strip them of such a Messianic reference as laid a foundation for an argument against their unbelief in the rejection of the Saviour. In the careful work of Bishop Kidder, "A Demonstration of the Messias," the truth of the Christian religion is established especially against the Jews, to a great extent by an appeal to the prophecies respecting Christ. The spirit of the book may be gathered from the motto, taken from Augustine, that is prefixed to it, "Venit Christus; complentur in ejus ortu, vita, dictis, factis, passionibus, morte, resurrectione, ascensione, omnia praeconia prophetarum." The treatise of Maclaurin, while it serves to establish the particular conclusion against the Jews has a wider scope, and deals less with a special inference than with the fundamental principles and internal structure of prophecy.

The same remark may be made in regard to the controversy about *the person of Christ*. Two of the very best books ever written on that subject formally review all the prophecies that shed light on his dignity and claims, —"Pye Smith's Scripture Testimony to the Messiah," and Hengstenberg's admirable "Christology." It is with no wish to detract from the honour due to these consummate masters of Biblical philology and criticism, when we venture to affirm, that Maclaurin takes a more summary and comprehensive view of the bearings of Old Testament prophecy, and indeed of all prophecy in Scripture. His object is not simply to show that a passage applies to Christ, or has been fulfilled in Christ, or gives such a view of Christ as to lay a basis in proof of his Divine personality or of his Divine mission. It is rather to demonstrate that the orthodox conception of his character and mission is essential to the whole scheme of prophecy, so that to expunge its Messianic reference were tantamount to its complete repudiation, because without Christ it would have no meaning. He treats not so much of predictions in detail as of their general scope. Unhappily, his great design does not seem to have been fully wrought out. The style is at times lumbering and careless. The practised eye will see at once that we have before us only the first hasty sketch of a great work, which the pressure of other duties may have prevented the author from executing and completing with the care due to the magnitude and value of the design. Still, with all its imperfections, the treatise is invaluable, and has not by any means been superseded by recent works in this department of literature. It differs from the great productions of the other authors to whom we have alluded as a judicial summary from the bench would differ from the minute and prolonged examination of the witnesses, upon whose testimony it was founded.

Another feature in Maclaurin's work will be understood by a reference to another controversy under which the merits of prophecy have been a point at issue. Next to David Hume among the infidels of the last century, Collins has been pronounced the ablest. In his works, particularly "The Literal Scheme of Prophecy," he endeavours to prove Christianity a species of mystical Judaism, derived from the allegorizing of Old Testament Scriptures in accommodation to Christian views and interests. There was no real prediction of Christ in these Scriptures; the Christians, developing and applying Rabbinical principles of interpretation, put upon the ancient Hebrew documents a gloss subservient to the purposes of their sect and system. In the same spirit, the rationalism of Germany pursued the same course of attack upon the evangelical exposition of prophecy. Every Messianic application was explained away, as a misconception originating in an unworthy and irrational prejudice,—the foregone conclusion in exegesis to which orthodox divines under the trammels of system stood committed. Such assaults against the Christian faith have not unfrequently issued in the detection of new sources of evidence in its favour. It was so in this case. Recent authorship on the subject of Christology has shewn that we need not rest satisfied with the simple appeal to the New Testament in proof that a passage in the Old is a Messianic prediction. Important purposes are served by the *à priori* reasoning, through which it is seen that so much of Christ is revealed in prophecy, as supplies the delineation of a personage unique in character and dignity, and separated by a wide interval from the common mass of humanity. In short, the tests given us by which we fix the application of a prophecy to Christ exhibit such a character, in such circumstances, as to defy the attempts of imposture to superinduce upon ordinary events any colouring which could render them capable of being identified as the fulfilment of particular predictions. It is clear that if principles of this nature can be discovered, determining, without reference to fulfilment, whether a prediction is Messianic or otherwise, the stronghold of rationalistic exegesis is demolished. Messianic theology is no afterthought. With the Hebrew documents in our hands, it is possible, apart from the record of the Saviour's life, to construct a scheme of tests under which every claim to Messiahship would fail, unless it fulfilled conditions to which the possession of a divine and of a human nature in one person is indispensable. The skill with which this mode of proof is brought to bear on the prophecies is perhaps the crowning merit of the Christology of Hengstenberg. A perusal, however, of the following treatise will satisfy the reader that the great German exegete has been anticipated by the Scottish divine. Maclaurin not only lays down the principles by which, apart from mere New Testament authority, the Messianic character of a prediction is established. In several cases, with singular skill and at considerable length, he applies these principles.

The analysis prefixed to the work is so carefully and clearly given, that we are under the impression that it must have been prepared by the author. We have accordingly abstained from any other review of the contents of this treatise.

INTRODUCTION.

THE proofs of Christianity from the prophecies in the Old Testament, applied to Christ in the New, are founded on some general principles, which it will be needful to have in view all along, and frequently to mention, in the reasonings contained in this Essay; and particularly on the following three propositions: First, That these prophecies are truly applicable to Christ, according to the most uncontested rules of interpretation of words or writings; secondly, That they are applicable to Christ *only*, especially when taken complexly; and, thirdly, That the things contained in these prophecies are of such a nature, that they could not be foreseen by human sagacity, nor be fulfilled by mere chance.

By prophecies relating to Christ are meant, in this essay, not only those that relate more directly to His person, or to His life and death; but also those that relate to the success of His doctrine, or to the opposition made to it; which take in the predictions relating to His Church, and to His enemies.

Concerning the first of the three general principles just now mentioned, it is proper to observe the following things. First, That though some of the prophecies applied to Christ are not yet fulfilled; yet this cannot invalidate the arguments taken from those that are fulfilled already; provided these be applied to Christ in the manner above mentioned, viz., really and peculiarly; and that the things foretold be such as could not be

foretold by mere sagacity or by chance. To deny this, is to pretend, that if the prophecies in view were truly divine, it behoved them to foretell nothing that was to happen after such or such a particular age; which is a supposition utterly unreasonable. If the prophecies that are not yet fulfilled cannot be improved as arguments for Christianity, neither can they be reasonably improved as objections against it.

It is needful to make another remark with respect to the order in which men ought to proceed, in inquiring whether the prophecies in view be truly applicable to Christ or not. The characters of Christ which the New Testament affirms to be found in the Old, may be usefully divided into three sorts: First, Those that may be most properly called *doctrinal characters*, because they relate to the doctrines concerning His peculiar personal glory, and mediatory offices. Secondly, Those that may be called *miraculous* or *supernatural* characters, because they relate to facts which all own to be miraculous and *supernatural*, if true; such as the characters relating to His miraculous conception, the miracles He wrought during His life, His resurrection from the dead, and the subsequent steps of His exaltation. Thirdly, Characters relating to *uncontested* facts, or facts of such *public notoriety* that unbelievers do not call them in question.

Of this last sort are various facts and events, relating partly to Christ's life and death, and partly to His Church, and partly to His enemies.

As to the first, unbelievers own the facts relating to the time and place of Christ's birth, the nation and family of which He descended, the low station in which He lived, and the sufferings of His life and death. Also the second they own: and they cannot but own several important facts relating to the amazing success of

Christ's doctrine ; particularly its producing the greatest revolution that ever happened in the world, in its most important concerns, namely, those of religion, by enlightening so many of the Gentile nations in the knowledge of the true God, dispelling heathen darkness, abolishing heathen idolatry, and establishing in its room the worship of the one Supreme Being, the Creator of the world. As to the third point, namely, facts relating to Christ's enemies, it is owned on all hands, that after the unbelieving Jews had crucified Christ himself, and yet had His gospel for several years preached to them, and continued obstinate in rejecting it, their temple and metropolis were destroyed, their civil polity dissolved, their nation dispersed through the world ; and that they have been *wanderers among the nations* ever from that time to this day : for however people differ about the true causes of these calamities, the reality of them, the extraordinary nature of them, and the period of time at which they began, are beyond all controversy.

Unbelievers own the truth of these and the like facts : they only deny that they were foretold.

The obvious differences betwixt the three sorts of characters that have been mentioned, point out the different uses made of them in the reasonings in view. Seeing it is an evident rule of just reasoning, that people should avoid begging the question, or taking for granted the conclusion that is to be proved ; therefore as a Christian, in arguing with an unbeliever, must not take it for granted that the doctrines or miracles that have been mentioned are true, so neither must an unbeliever take it for granted that they are false. The true way is, to begin with the facts that are uncontested. If it can be proved, that these uncontested facts were foretold,

and that the prophecies concerning them make up, as it were, a historical description of Christ, distinguishing Him from all others; and that the facts themselves are of that nature that they could not be foretold but by Divine inspiration; all these things will make up a convincing proof, at once of the divinity of the prophecies, and of the divine mission of Christ, and consequently of the truth of the doctrines and miracles in question.

If it be asked, whether the prophecies containing these doctrines and miracles be of use in convincing unbelievers? in answer to this, it is sufficient at present to observe, that these prophecies may be said to contain *uncontested facts*, in so far as they foretell the faith and worship of the gospel-church, or of the worshippers of God among the Gentile nations. Thus it is evidently a foretelling of *uncontested facts*, if the prophets foretell that the Gentile nations, in worshipping the true God, would seek salvation and happiness from Him, through a Mediator clothed with such offices as the gospel ascribes to Christ, as the universal Prophet, Priest, and King, of the people of God of all nations. Though unbelievers do not own the truth of these and the like peculiar doctrines of the gospel, yet they must own it as a fact of public notoriety, that these doctrines are believed and professed by the Christian nations; and if it can be proved, that the prophets not only assert the *truth* of these doctrines, but also foretell the *actual belief* and *profession* of them among the nations; it will follow that the prophecies containing gospel-doctrines contain evident proofs from uncontested facts.

The above-mentioned rule of beginning with uncontested facts shows the reasonableness of some diversity in the method of arguing from the prophecies in different

ages; because the facts that are uncontested in one age may not be so in another. In the days of the Apostles, at the first preaching of the Gospel, the prophecies concerning the enlightening of the Gentiles, could not be considered, as they may and ought to be now, as containing uncontested facts; because that great revolution was not yet accomplished. The actual accomplishment of it gives us some advantage above the first Christians, as they had the advantage of us in various other respects. The miracles of the Apostles behoved to be acknowledged as uncontested facts among the multitudes of diverse nations who were eye-witnesses of them; by these miracles they proved Christ's divine mission, His resurrection, and the other supernatural facts and doctrines which constitute the peculiarities of the Gospel. It was a strong corroboration of the argument from miracles, that the peculiar doctrines and facts contained in the Gospel were also contained in the writings of the prophets; and in a matter of so great importance, no one proof, however evident, could make additional confirmation superfluous.

The second general principle which it is needful to have frequently in view in the following reasonings, is, That the prophecies applied to Christ are applicable to him *only*, especially when they are taken complexly. There are some of the historical characters of Christ which are peculiar to Him, even when they are taken separately, such as the characters relating to the enlightening of the Gentile nations; but there are others which, when taken separately, are common to many other persons, such as to be born at such a time and place, and of such a family; to live in such a station; to suffer a violent death, and the like.

Concerning these two different sorts of characters, it

is proper to observe the following things:—*First,* That even those characters which, taken separately, are common to many different persons, when joined to characters that are of a singular and distinguishing nature, add much to the evidence. Thus, whereas it is an evident proof that the prophecies in view are meant of Christ, if they speak of one extraordinary person who was to bring about such an enlightening of the Gentiles, as is known to have been the effect of the Gospel; it is still a great addition to the evidence, if they foretell the time and place of that extraordinary person's birth, the family of which he was to descend, and the other circumstances formerly hinted at; for though these things, taken separately, are common to Jesus Christ with many others; yet they distinguish Him from many more who were not born at such a time or place, or of such a family. And though it should be supposed that without inspiration men might have foretold the enlightening of the Gentiles by one eminent person, it is evidently impossible that, without inspiration, men should foretell when, or where, or of what nation or family that particular person should be born.

Another thing needful to be observed is, That oftimes, where there are no historical characters or events which, taken separately, are of such a peculiar and singular nature as to distinguish one particular person from all others; a *combination* or *series of things,* which of themselves are of a common, and not of an extraordinary kind, may make up a clear historical description of one person, sufficiently characterising and distinguishing him from all others whatsoever. There is many a true description or history of a particular person, or event, or series of events, in which, if it be taken into pieces, it will be hard to find any one thing of which there are

not various resemblances in descriptions of quite different persons or events;* just as in the truest pictures, done to the greatest perfection, it will be hard to find any one feature of which there are not resemblances in the pictures of several other persons, who, upon the whole, may be very unlike one another. As it is not one particular feature, but the whole complexion, or complication of features, that infallibly distinguishes one face from all others; so it is not, generally speaking, one particular quality or event, but a complication of such things, that distinguishes one particular character or history from all others. These things show, on the one hand, that it is a particular advantage in the prophetical description of Christ, that it contains several characters which, even taken separately, are peculiar to Him; and, on the other hand, that those characters which, taken separately, are common to Him with others, are, when taken complexly, or when joined with the more extraordinary and singular characters, of manifold use in the argument in view.

The third general principle needful to be proved is, That the things contained in the prophecies in view are things that could not be foreseen by human sagacity, or fulfilled, as it were, by chance. Human sagacity can foresee events that happen according to the uniform course of nature, or events of which there are probable causes existing at the time when they are foretold. Thus, for instance, in the days of Seneca, the knowledge that learned men had of geography, and the state of navigation even at that time, were probable causes of new discoveries in the Atlantic Ocean; so that the famous verses concerning such future discoveries cannot be said

* See Eccles. i. 9, 10.

to contain a prophecy, in the strict and most proper sense of the word.*

Though human sagacity may foresee some things at a distance as probable, yet innumerable things are beyond its reach; nor is there any true history in the world, but whoever reads it, and knows the truth of it, is fully persuaded that it was impossible to have written it, after the events had happened, without sufficient information, or before the events happened, without inspiration, which is the only way of sufficient information of things to come.

* See Verulam's [Lord Bacon's] Essays, Essay 35.

CHAPTER I.

OF PROPHECIES WHICH SPEAK EXPRESSLY OF ONE PARTICULAR PERSON WHO WAS TO BE, IN A PECULIAR MANNER, "THE LIGHT OF THE GENTILES;" AND OF THE DOCTRINES AND EVENTS CONTAINED IN THOSE PROPHECIES.

It was observed in the Introduction, that some of the most remarkable uncontested facts belonging to the history of Christ, are those which relate to that enlightening of the Gentile nations, which is owned to have been the effect of the Christ's doctrine. Though unbelievers deny the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, they own, that the gospel was the means of abolishing the heathen polytheism and idolatry, and of enlightening the Gentile nations in the knowledge of the great principles of natural religion, concerning the unity of God, His infinite perfections, His providence, and His law. It is useful, therefore, to begin with the prophecies which treat of this great revolution, which must be owned to be the most remarkable that ever happened in the world, and to relate to its most important concerns, if the concerns of religion be owned to be such.

The prophecies on this subject may be usefully divided into different sorts. Some of them speak expressly of one particular person sent of God, to whom the enlightening of the Gentiles would be chiefly owing; while others treat of the same great event, without speaking of that particular person. Some of the prophecies con-

cerning that event, or that person, are more general and short; others are more full and particular, as containing a greater number of facts, and other characters, contiguous to one another. It is reasonable to begin with these last, because they serve to give light to the rest; it being one of the most useful rules in interpreting any writings, that passages that are more obscure or general, should be explained by those that are more clear and particular.

Among the prophecies which speak most clearly and fully of one particular person who was to be the *Light of the Gentiles*, are the following passages in Isaiah, viz. the 11th, 42d, and 49th chapters throughout, the prediction that begins at the 13th verse of the 52d chapter, and is continued through the whole of the 53d, together with the 55th and the 56th chapters. In considering the things contained in these chapters, it will be useful to observe, that they can be proved to treat of one and the same subject, by the arguments which convince us in any other case, that one and the same subject is treated of in different writings, or different parts of any one writing; as, for instance, the arguments which satisfy us that certain passages, in the different Evangelists, are parallel to one another. And whereas the most plausible objection against the evidences of the prophecies which speak of Him who was to be the *Light of the Gentiles*, is the pretence made by some, that these prophecies are applicable to some ancient kings or prophets among the Jews, who made proselytes of some particular persons among the Gentiles; it will therefore be needful to observe, with due attention, how clearly the expressions of the prophets describe a conversion, not merely of some particular persons, but of nations; and how the characters they give, of that conversion of the Gentiles which

they foretell, are applicable only to what is known in fact to have been the effect of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The 49th chapter of Isaiah contains a very considerable number of uncontested facts, relating to the three heads formerly mentioned, viz., the history of the life of that eminent person who was to be the *Light of the Gentiles;* the history of His Church, and of His enemies; and several remarkable doctrinal characters mixed with these facts: all which things are set forth, partly by metaphors, partly by more clear expressions, which give sufficient explication of those metaphors, as to their true meaning, not only in this prophecy, but also in other prophecies where they occur. It is useful to distinguish the chief contents of this remarkable prophecy into several articles, to render subsequent references more easy, in comparing parallel prophecies together.

I. As to the enlightening of the Gentiles, the eminent person who is spoken of all along, almost through the first half of the chapter, is said (in ver. 6, 8,) to be given by God for a *Light to the Gentiles, that he might be God's salvation to the ends of the earth,* and to be *given for a covenant to the people, to establish the earth,* and *to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.* He is brought in at the beginning of the chapter, as calling, in a solemn manner, to the Isles, and to people that were far off, to listen to Him; which, according to the prophetic style, as will be proved afterwards, implies, that these people actually would listen to Him, as is more fully expressed in the following parts of the chapter. It is said, in ver. 7, that though this extraordinary person would be despised by men, and abhorred by the nation, (that is, the Jewish nation, as will be proved afterwards,) kings would see and arise, and princes would worship, because of the Holy One of Israel, who had chosen Him, viz., Him who

was to be a light to the Gentiles. It is foretold in ver. 23, that kings would become nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers, to Zion, or to the society of the worshippers of the true God: and they are represented, not only as affording protection, but as shewing such special regard to that society, as implies, as they would join themselves to it; and consequently would no more patronize heathenism, but give the countenance of authority to the true religion. In the 12th, 18th, and following verses, people of remote countries are represented as gathering themselves to Zion, as beautifying and adorning her, as becoming her children, as crowding and thronging to her, and saying "The place is too straight for me: give place to me that I may dwell."* As figurative expressions may be as clear and intelligible, in many cases, as any other whatever; so the obvious meaning of these expressions of the prophet is, that great multitudes of distant nations would join themselves to the Church of God at the time the prophet has in view. And as, in ver. 20, 21, Zion is represented as surprised at the numbers of her new children, after the loss of other children which she had formerly, this is very naturally applicable to the accession of the Gentiles, compensating the loss of so many of the Jews; nor can it be reasonably applied to any other thing.

II. As to the enemies of him who was to be the Light of the Gentiles, it is very remarkable, that in this prophecy, as well as in several others, the treatment which that eminent person would meet with from the Gentiles, is represented as the reverse of what he would meet with from the Jews; whereas in the verses formerly cited, it is said, that the Gentiles would be gathered to him; (for

* Compare Gen. xlix. 10.

when it is said, that they would gather to Zion, it necessarily implies, that they would gather to Him who is called God's covenant and salvation.) It is said plainly enough in ver. 5, that Israel would not be gathered to Him. When He is said, in ver. 7, to be one whom man despiseth, and whom *the nation* abhorreth; though it is not said expressly *the Jewish nation*, yet it is evident this must be the meaning; because the context shows, that the Gentile nations would honour Him, and gather to Him, and that the Jews would not. Hence it follows, that when it is said, ver. 4, that "he would spend His strength for nought, and in vain," it must be meant of the bad success of His doctrine among the Jews, seeing its success among the Gentiles is represented as so very considerable. Though the prophet's expressions imply, that the person spoken of would be rejected by the prevailing party among the Jews, it is very consistent with this, that He would be received and honoured by a part of that people: which seems to be plainly enough intimated in ver. 6; where it is said, "It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore *the preserved* of Israel."

All these things show, how unreasonable it is to imagine, that the prophet is all along speaking of the whole Israelitish nation, under the notion of a particular person who was to enlighten the Gentiles; because the person whom the prophet speaks of, is, in ver. 3, called by the name of *Israel*. In many other cases, in different languages, the name of a nation is given to the chief person belonging to it; as when *the Assyrian*, *the Persian*, or *Roman*, signify the sovereigns of these nations. It is no wonder the name of *Israel* should be given to Him who is at the same time the light that lightens the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel; being indeed

the chief person, the sovereign, and chief ornament of that nation, and the person to whom the name of *Israel,* in its primary meaning, is chiefly applicable. It is evidently absurd to suppose, that it is the Israelitish nation that the prophet speaks of, under the notion of an individual person, when he tells so plainly, that the person he means, is one to whom the Israelitish nation *would not be gathered;* whom the Israelitish *nation would despise and abhor;* who would spend his strength in vain among that nation, only a remnant among them would be restored by him. Every body will own, that it is demonstrable, that when the Evangelist Matthew narrates the history of Jesus Christ, he does not mean, by Jesus Christ, the nation of Israel, though once he applies the name of Israel to him. The same kind of arguments will prove, that the prophet Isaiah, in the prediction in view, and in many others, is not speaking of the nation of Israel under the notion of a person, but of a real individual person, who would be rejected by the Jews, and received by the Gentiles.

At the end of the chapter which we are considering, there are awful threatenings against Zion's enemies and oppressors. The Jews indeed are not expressly mentioned; but it is evident from the former parts of the chapter, that the enemies of Him who was to be the Light of the Gentiles would be enemies of Zion; and that the prevailing party among the Jews would be of that number.

III. As to the personal history of the eminent person whom the prophet speaks of, some facts relating to it are implied in the passages already cited, relating to his enemies. The expressions about his spending his strength for nought among the Jews, and about his being despised and abhorred by that nation, plainly implying an oppo-

sition that would be very violent and extensive, evidently teach us, that he would live among the Jews, that he would exercise a laborious ministry among them, and suffer a great deal from them. When he is expressly called, in ver. 7, *a servant of rulers*, that title appears to be designed, as it were, on purpose to refute the false notion of the Messiah that prevailed so much afterwards, as if He was to be a magnificent temporal prince. The prophet's words plainly import, that the person he speaks of was to live in a low station of life.

IV. As to doctrinal characters, it is evident, that the light with which it is foretold that God would favour the Gentiles, is not represented as a mere speculative knowledge of God, but a practical and most comfortable knowledge of Him, founded on a revelation of mercy and grace, and directing men to a state of true holiness and happiness. It will be proved afterwards, that the prophets teach the same doctrine with the apostles, about what they call *God's covenant and salvation*, as including deliverance from sin, together with the attainment of the favour, the image, and the enjoyment of God; which are the things wherein the salvation of sinners, and true happiness of rational creatures, chiefly consist, according both to Scripture and reason. Now in the prophecies in view, it is not said merely, that he who was to be the Light of the Gentiles would instruct the Gentiles in the doctrines concerning God's covenant and salvation; which might be done by the most inconsiderable person, who should be well instructed about these things himself. This extraordinary person is said to be himself that covenant and that salvation. It must be owned, that this manner of expression is very singular; but this itself is an argument, that the blessings of God's

covenant and salvation would be, in a *singular manner*, owing to that person.

Hence it follows, that if we find, in other places, that the prophets speak of one particular person sent of God, who was to do a great deal more for our salvation, besides mere instruction; particularly if we find, that they speak of one who was to suffer for our sins, and to purchase our salvation; we have good cause to explain the more general expressions, about one who was to be God's covenant and salvation, by those more particular expressions, about one who was to do a thing so extraordinary and singular for us, as to purchase that salvation for us by his sufferings and death; seeing the best rules of interpretation oblige us to explain expressions that are more obscure and general by those that are more clear and particular.

He who is called the *Light of the Gentiles*, as he is said to be God's covenant and salvation, is represented as the servant of God in whom he will be glorified, ver. 3; as *called*, ver. 1, and *chosen*, ver. 7, of God, and in a peculiar manner fitted for a work of singular importance, and supported in it, ver. 2. It is said that God would make his *mouth* like a sharp sword, ver. 2., which seems plainly to denote the peculiar efficacy of his doctrine; that God would hide him in the shadow of his hand, and make him a polished shaft, ver. 2; that he would be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and that his God would be his strength, ver. 5.

V. As to the figures by which the above-mentioned facts and doctrines are expressed, that great work of divine mercy, God's enlightening the Gentiles, and his making them partakers of his covenant and salvation, is expressed by delivering them from prison and darkness, feeding them in desirable pastures, and guiding

them by springs of water, ver. 9, 10, by God's establishing the earth, ver. 8, and making the desolate heritages to be inherited; as also by the multiplying of Zion's children, multitudes thronging into Zion, finding the place too strait for them, and making it necessary that Zion should be enlarged to receive crowds of new inhabitants. The great changes by which Providence would remove obstacles are expressed by levelling mountains, ver. 11.

VI. There are two remarkable practical instructions, which have a near affinity to one another, and which are mixed with the facts and doctrines above mentioned, both in this prophecy, and in several others, which will be considered afterwards, First, Instructions concerning God's gracious care to comfort his afflicted people, and to give them satisfying relief from all their sorrows, ver. 14, 15, 16; and, secondly, Instructions concerning the singular importance and excellency of the great things which God was to do for his people, about the time that the Gentile nations would be enlightened, ver. 13, these things being represented as grounds of the universal triumph of heaven and earth. It will appear afterwards, that it is very usual with the prophets, in speaking of that happy time, to break out into such joyful exclamations as we find in this chapter, in ver. 13: "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains."

VII. Whereas this chapter consists of two parts, the first of which speaks expressly of Him who was to be the light of the Gentiles, to whom the salvation of Zion, and the increase of her inhabitants, would be in a singular and peculiar manner owing; while the second part contains various predictions concerning Zion herself, and her enemies, relating to events that would happen

about the time of the enlightening of the Gentiles, without express mention of Him by whom that great change would be brought about: it is proper to observe, that these things are to be considered only as different branches of one continued discourse, or complex prediction; and not as if they were different subjects, having no connection with one another. The justness and usefulness of this remark will appear afterwards, in considering how far we may reasonably extend our views, in explaining any prophetic text by the foregoing or following context.

Isaiah xlii.

All the evidence that can convince us in other cases that two different writings or different parts of one writing, treat of one and the same subject, is applicable to the 42d chapter of Isaiah, compared with the 49th. As in chapter 49 it is said of the person there mentioned, that God "would give him for a light to the Gentiles, and a covenant to the people, that he might establish the earth,—and that He might say to the prisoners, Go forth; and to them that sit in darkness, Shew yourselves;" and in a particular manner the isles, and people afar off, are called to listen to Him: so as to this 42d chapter, it foretells of the eminent person it treats of, that God "would give Him for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house," verse 6, 7; that He "would bring forth judgment to the Gentiles," verse 1. And more particularly it is foretold, that the isles would wait for His law, verse 4; and the prophet exhorts "the isles and their inhabitants to sing unto the Lord a new

song; and again a little below exhorts men to "give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands," verse 10, 12.

Though the conversion of the kings of the Gentiles is not mentioned so expressly here as in the chapter formerly considered, yet it is plainly implied in the divine threatenings pronounced against idolatry. It is foretold, verse 17, that "they shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods." In other prophecies, as well as this, threatenings against idolatry are mixed sometimes with the promises of enlightening of the Gentiles; the strong expressions made use of in these threatenings plainly denote such an overthrow of the heathen idolatry, as supposes its being deprived of the countenance of authority. Before the times of the gospel, the enemies of the true religion had so far prevailed as to hinder the enlightening of the nations. In the 13th and 14th verses of this chapter God speaks of Himself as "prevailing against His enemies;" and for that end "going forth as a mighty man, stirring up jealousy like a man of war; after having long held his peace, been still, and refrained himself."*

These and the like expressions, here and in other prophecies, evidently point out an important revolution in the world in favour of the true religion, vastly different from any such conversion of particular proselytes as might have been brought about by any Jewish king or prophet before the coming of Christ. The singular magnificence of style by which the prophets describe what God was to do when he would enlighten the Gentiles; their expressions about the greatness of the change

* See Acts xvii. 30.

He was to produce, the greatness of the obstacles He was to remove, the extraordinary display He was to make of His power and glory, the great support He was to give to the particular person who was to be the light of the Gentiles, the solemn manner in which they introduce their predictions on this subject, and the triumphant exclamations they mix with them, or annex to them, calling to all the ends of the earth, and sometimes to heaven and earth, to sing and rejoice on account of the great and glad tidings they were proclaiming: all these things show that it is not merely the conversion of some particular proselytes they are speaking of, but that conversion of nations which is known to have been the peculiar effect of the gospel. We have remarkable instances of this singular magnificence of style in this same 42d chapter, particularly in the following sentences. "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.—Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners out of the prison.—I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, *neither my praise to graven images.* Behold, the former things are come to pass, and *new things* do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth; ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let

the wilderness, and the cities thereof, lift up their voice. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands," &c.

It would be unreasonable to object, that the peculiar loftiness of the eastern style, frequently magnifying things above their real greatness, may account for these high expressions, without supposing any more extensive conversion of the Gentiles than what sometimes happened under the Old Testament. Descriptions of divine power can never be too lofty. It can never be proved, that the Scripture any where gives such descriptions of it, as those now cited, in order to magnify any ordinary or inconsiderable event. We see here, the prophet first gives a large and sublime description of the power of the Most High, manifested in the creation of the universe and of its inhabitants; on purpose to show his sufficiency to execute certain great designs, in which he was to employ one eminent person, whom he would give to be a covenant to the people, and a light to the Gentiles; that he might open the blind eyes, and bring prisoners out of the prison; and produce those happy changes which are expressly called *new things,* (which cannot be said of the conversion of particular proselytes;) such *new things* that the prediction of them would clearly demonstrate prescience: "Behold, new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them;" *new things* that would restore to the true God the religious honours that had been sacrilegiously given to idols; new things that would produce new songs to the Lord, and devout transports *in the cities of the wilderness;* by which must be meant, according to the context and other parallel prophecies, the cities of the Gentles; and particularly *in the islands,* which name, as good interpreters have observed,

was given by the Jews to remote nations separated from Judea by the sea.

II. Some predictions relating to the enemies of Him who was to be the light of the Gentiles, are implied in the above-cited threatenings against the abettors of idolatry: and when it is said, in verse 4, "He shall not fail, nor *be discouraged,* till He have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for His law," it is plainly enough intimated, that He would meet with such opposition as might *discourage* and disappoint other persons in any undertaking, but would by no means have that effect on Him. But whereas mere general expressions about the enemies of the eminent person in view might be applicable to idolatrous Heathens as well as to unbelieving Jews, the close of this chapter speaks very plainly, not of the former, but of the latter. In verses 19 and 20, the prophet speaks of the blindness of certain persons, whom he calls *God's servants* and *messengers:* such titles are not applicable to Heathen, but to Jewish teachers and rulers; who both professed themselves to be God's servants and messengers, and were indeed appointed to such offices, notwithstanding their mal-administration. When it is said of these people, verse 20, "Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not," it is implied, they would have abundant means of instruction and conviction, but would inexcusably misimprove them. Three times in one verse (the 19th) they are called *blind.*

The following context not only foretells extraordinary desolations that were to come on those persons; but plainly intimates, that notwithstanding the previous warnings given them, they would not consider the true causes of their calamities. Thus in verses 24 and 25, it is said: "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the

robbers? did not the Lord, He against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in His ways, neither were they *obedient unto His law.* Therefore He hath poured upon them the fury of His anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, *yet he knew not;* and it burned him, *yet he laid it not to heart.*" The greatness of the calamities here foretold, prove that these expressions, "He knew not," and "He laid it not to heart," cannot signify, that they would be insensible of these calamities, but that they would not acknowledge and consider the true causes of them.

To show the clearness of this prediction, it is proper to observe, that its being meant of the unbelieving Jews, is not only evident from the above-mentioned title, of *God's messengers and servants*, given to those the prophet speaks of in verse 19; but that the thing is put beyond all question by verse 24, which gives them the name of *Jacob and Israel.*

If it be objected against applying verse 19 to the Jewish teachers or rulers, that that text speaks only of the Lord's messenger and servant in the singular number; it is sufficient to observe, on the one hand, that verse 18, which is the introduction to this prediction, speaks of blind and deaf persons in the plural number; and, on the other hand, that in verse 25, the prophet is evidently speaking of a body of people, though the personal pronoun is used there in the singular number four or five times: "*He* knew not, it burned *him, he* laid it not to heart," &c.

It may perhaps be farther objected, that though the above-cited passages speak of the unbelief and desolation of the Jews, yet as such things have happened to that people at very different times, so this prediction does not tell expressly that it relates to the times of the

enlightening of the Gentiles. But, in answer to this, seeing the times of the enlightening of the Gentiles are the times treated of through the whole foregoing part of the chapter, it is unreasonable to suppose, without any manner of ground, that the Prophet speaks of quite different times in the close of the chapter. It is of public notoriety, that the doctrine which enlightened the Gentiles was rejected by the prevailing party of the Jews; and that, not long after, they met with the most amazing and most durable desolation that either they themselves, or any other nation, ever met with. As it has been proved already, and will be yet farther confirmed, that chap. xlii. is parallel to chap. xlix.: seeing chap. xlix. speaks so expressly of the Jews as rejecting him who would enlighten the Gentiles, this shews that the predictions in chap. xlii. about the blindness of the Jews relate to the same event. It will be afterwards observed, that it is even surprising how frequently the prophets intermix predictions about the enlightening of the Gentiles, and the unbelief of the Jews. These things shew, that by all the best rules of interpretation, whether we consider the context, or parallel prophecies, or compare predictions with events, the passages in view must relate to that blindness and desolation of the Jews that would happen in the times of the enlightening of the Gentiles.

III. As chap. xlix. calls Him who would be the Light of the Gentiles, *a servant of rulers*, plainly importing, that He would not be a temporal ruler or prince Himself, but live in a low station of life; so the same thing is clearly enough intimated in this 42d chapter, ver. 2, "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." Nothing can be more inconsistent

with the Jewish notion of a temporal Messiah, who would fill the world with the noise of his conquests.

IV. As to doctrinal characters, both the chapters that we are comparing, teach us, that he who would be the Light of the Gentiles would be given by God for a covenant of the people; which, as was proved above, is a character of a very singular and distinguishing nature. And as in chap. xlix. it is said, that that extraordinary person would be chosen and called of God, and glorious in God's eyes; that God would hide Him in His hand and be His strength, and make His mouth as a sharp sword; so in chap. xlii. ver. 1, 6, He who is there described, is called God's servant whom He would uphold, His elect in whom His soul delights, whom He would call in righteousness, holding His hand, and keeping Him, and on whom He would put His Spirit. All which expressions, especially when joined with the above-mentioned facts and doctrines, form a considerable complication of eminent and distinguishing characters, proving, that these two prophecies treat of the same person, and of the same series of events.

V. This is farther confirmed by the obvious harmony between these prophecies, as to some of the principal figures by which they express the great events they treat of. The enlightening of the Gentiles is expressed in both, by deliverance from prison and darkness; and what is expressed in the one by "establishing the earth," is expressed in the other by "setting judgment in the earth;" and the removal of all obstacles to that gracious design is expressed by levelling mountains.

VI. In both prophecies, the divine works they treat of are mentioned as means of singular consolation to God's afflicted people, and as grounds of universal and extra-

ordinary exultation, as appears by comparing chap. xlix, verses 13, 14, 15, with chap. xlii, verses 4, 10.

Isaiah lii. liii. liv.

As the division of chapters, however of manifold use, is not of divine institution, several interpreters have justly observed, that the latter part of chap. lii. belongs to the prophecy that fills chap. liii.; and there is good ground for considering the three following chapters as a continuation of it; because these chapters speak evidently of that great event, the enlightening of the Gentiles, and the preceding chapters treat of the person by whom that event would be accomplished.

The particular person mentioned at the close of chap. lii. is there called *God's servant:* He who is described in chap. liii. is there called *God's righteous servant;* both chapters describe the person they speak of, as undergoing great sufferings, and then arriving at high exaltation; and the expressions in both chapters, not only concerning those sufferings and that exaltation, but also concerning the effects and consequences of those things, make up a complication of characters of a very singular and distinguishing nature.

Though the eminent person spoken of in the last three verses of chap. lii. is not expressly called the Light of the Gentiles, yet as the same thing may be expressed with equal evidence in various equivalent terms, the enlightening of the Gentile nations is necessarily implied in the expressions about the singular blessings which that eminent servant of God is there said to bestow on those nations and their kings; seeing it is said, after mentioning His sufferings and exaltation, "So shall He sprinkle *many nations: the kings* shall shut their mouths

at Him; for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which thay had not heard shall they consider."

Here it is obvious, that the prophet is not speaking of particular proselytes, but *nations;* that seeing the Jews were but one nation, a plurality of nations must include the Gentiles, (which is still more clear, inasmuch as the prophet speaks expressly of *many nations;*) as also, that the kings he speaks of must be the kings of those many (Gentile) nations; and that seeing those kings are said to listen with attention and reverence to new and surprising instructions, delivered by one who is expressly called *the servant of God,* this imports, that they would hearken to a new revelation that would come from God. And whereas what is most directly asserted by all these expressions is, that that servant of God would instruct and enlighten the *kings* of the many Gentile nations, it is evidently implied that he would enlighten those Gentile nations themselves; especially seeing not only the kings, but the many nations themselves, are expressly said to be *sprinkled* by him.

By the most uncontested rules of interpretation, the sprinkling of many nations here mentioned, must be explained by other places, both in this and other prophets, where the same or the like expressions signify cleansing from sin, by remission and sanctification; as Isa. i. 13; Ps. ii. 7; Ezek. xxxvi. 25; especially seeing almost the whole following context in chap. liii. speaks of the same person who is here said to sprinkle many nations as sprinkling or cleansing us from our sins by his blood, by suffering for them in our stead. And when, in ver. 10, his soul is said to be made a sacrifice for sin, it plainly implies, that he was to make that real and effectual atonement for sin, which the sacrificial sprinkling ap-

pointed by the law of Moses could only typify. All which is further confirmed by ver. 11 which tells us, that by his knowledge, this righteous servant of God would justify many; justification being, in the style of the Old as well as of the New Testament, opposed to condemnation, as signifying men's being assoilzied and acquitted in judgment. This explication of the sprinkling which the prophet speaks of, is confirmed by the various phrases in so many different languages, expressing guilt by words which in their primary meaning signify pollution, and expressing absolution and justification by words that signify sprinkling or cleansing. And whereas, though the greatest part of chap. liii. ascribes our justification to the sufferings of that eminent person spoken of, ver. 11 seems to ascribe it to his knowledge; these things are abundantly consistent, whether by that knowledge we understand the doctrine of that great servant of God, or our knowledge and acknowledgment of it; seeing it is not only very consistent, but exceedingly suitable, that if that person's soul was to be made a sacrifice for our sins, the doctrine revealing that sacrifice, and divine mercy displayed in it, should be the outward means, and our acknowledgment of it the inward means of applying its efficacy; which will be afterwards proved to be the doctrine of the prophets, as well as of the apostles, and is a further proof, that sprinkling many (Gentile) nations necessarily implies enlightening them.

II. As to the enemies of the great person in view, though the Jews are not expressly mentioned as rejecting him, yet this is evidently implied in ver. 2, 3, 4; because it is not reasonable to suppose that the prophet is speaking in the name of other nations, but rather of his own nation, when he says, "When *we* shall see him, there is no beauty that *we* should desire him. He is

despised and rejected of men;—and *we* hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and *we* esteemed him not;—*we* did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Nor is it reasonable to suppose, if the *report* or doctrine of the person spoken of, was to be believed by the body of the Jewish nation, that the prophet would complain, as he does in ver. 1: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" There is a remarkable conformity, both as to matter and style, between the predictions about Jewish unbelief in chap. xlix. and chap. liii. In the former, it is said concerning the eminent person spoken of, that Israel would not be gathered to him; that he would be despised by man, or (as it is in the original) a despised soul, and abhorred of the nation. And here in chap. liii. it is said of the people whom the prophet speaks of, that they would not esteem him; that they should see no beauty in him that they should desire him, that they would reckon him stricken and smitten of God; and that he would be rejected and despised of men.

III. The passages already cited, joined with other passages in this remarkable prophecy, about him who was both to enlighten and to sprinkle many nations, shew, that the history of his life would be in a great measure a history of sufferings and sorrows. They shew, chap. 2, 3, 8, 9, that he would grow up and live in a low station; that he would want those external advantages that usually attract respect; that he would be a man of sorrows in his life, and would be at last cut off by a violent death; and whereas men may meet with such a death, either by assassination, or by the sentence of civil power; even this is not left undetermined, but it is intimated, that that extraordinary person would be con-

demned in judgment, and suffer death under colour of public justice.

IV. As to doctrinal characters, the prophet, in speaking of the nature, the causes, and effects of the sufferings he describes, teaches and inculcates in a variety of the clearest expressions imaginable, the same doctrine that the New Testament teaches concerning the sufferings of Christ, viz. that they were a sacrifice for our sins; that our sins were the causes of them; that our salvation, our peace, our healing, our justification, were the end and effect of them, ver. 5, 10, 11; and likewise adds, that he whose soul was to be made a sacrifice for our sins, was to make intercession for transgressors, ver. 12. All which implies that he was not only to enlighten men in the knowledge of God's covenant by his doctrine, but also was to purchase the blessings of that covenant by his blood, and to procure them by his intercession; and consequently, that he was to be the great universal priest, as well as prophet, of the people of God; seeing oblation and intercession, the two principal parts of the priestly office, as well as instruction by immediate revelation, the great character of the prophetical office, are so clearly ascribed to him.

Seeing this doctrine shews, that the blessings of God's covenant would be owing in a peculiar manner to that extraordinary person, as being not only revealed and offered, but also purchased and procured by Him; hence it follows, that it is by this particular important doctrine that we ought to explain some more general expressions in other prophecies, where the person spoken of is represented as being, in a singular and peculiar manner, the author of our salvation, or of the blessings of God's covenant, though the manner of His influence on these things be not so particularly defined in those other passages as

in this 53d of Isaiah, which is justly reckoned one of the clearest and fullest predictions in the Old Testament.

When He who was to be the light of the Gentiles, is said to be given for a covenant of the people, and to be God's salvation to the ends of the earth, as in chap. xlii. and xlix. formerly considered; and also when we read of one who is supposed to be known by the title of *the messenger of the covenant,* Mal. iii. 1, as a title belonging to Him in a singular and peculiar manner; or when we find the prophets speaking of "the blood of the covenant," as that by which "prisoners are sent out of the pit wherein is no water," Zech. ix. 11; or of the determined time for "finishing the transgression, making an end of sins, making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness," Dan. ix. 24; we ought to look on the doctrine contained in the 53d of Isaiah as a key to those more general prophecies. Nor can this be denied without violating that rule of interpretation which has been so oft referred to, and is so much relied on in other cases, viz., That expressions that are more general and indefinite, should be explained by other expressions relating to the same subject that are more clear and particular.

V. Though the above-mentioned figures, contained in chap. xlii. and xlix. are not to be met with in this 53d chapter: yet some of the most remarkable of them are to be found in chap. liv.; which, for the reasons formerly hinted,* may justly be considered as a continuation of the preceding prophecy; seeing, though it does not speak so expressly of the particular person by whom the enlightening of the Gentiles was to be brought about, yet it speaks clearly enough of that great event itself;

* See above, on Isaiah xlix.

as it is foretold in the plainest expressions in verse 5, that the Holy One of Israel would be called the God of the whole earth, and consequently of the Gentile nations; and in the context, ver. 1, 2, 3, the church of God diffused among the Gentiles, is considered as a woman who had been formerly barren, but was now breaking forth into singing, because of the multitude of her children; as enlarging the place of her tent; stretching forth the curtains of her habitations; breaking forth on the right hand and on the left; her seed inheriting the Gentiles and making the desolate cities to be inhabited.

VI. As these figures have so obvious and manifold a resemblance to those made use of in the prophecies formerly considered, as of itself forms a considerable proof, that this chapter, and those other prophecies, treat of the same events and times; so this is farther confirmed by the harmony of those different prophecies, as to instructions relating to the two above-mentioned practical subjects, viz., the consolations of God's afflicted people, and the universal joy and exultation of God's church in general, as appears by comparing ver. 1, 7, 11, &c., of this chapter, with the passages in the other chapters formerly considered.

Isaiah lv. lvi.

Whereas the description given in chapters lii. and liii. of the particular person who was to be the light of the Gentiles, is interrupted in chap. liv. (which speaks indeed of that great event itself, the enlightening of the Gentiles, but does not mention the particular person by whom that event was to be accomplished), the description of that extraordinary person is again resumed in chap. lv.; which not only contains some singular characters of him, coin-

ciding with those formerly mentioned, but likewise adds some new characters, which are of considerable importance, and tend to make the predictions concerning him more special and circumstantiate. He is not indeed expressly called the *Light of the Gentiles* in this as in some other chapters; but the thing meant by that title is evidently enough affirmed of Him.

It appears from ver. 3 and 4, that the person here spoken of, who is called by the name of *David*, is one to whom men would be beholden in a singular and peculiar manner for the mercies contained in God's everlasting covenant; which mercies are expressed, ver. 1, by the metaphors of waters, wine, and milk; and are in part explained in ver. 7, by the promises of abundant pardon to the penitent. It is one of the strongest expressions imaginable of our singular obligations to that mystical David, for the mercies of the divine covenant, that these mercies are called *his mercies:* "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." When therefore the nations spoken of ver. 5, are represented as called by this David, and as complying with his call, it implies, that they would be called, and actually brought into a happy participation of the mercies of God's covenant, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34; which necessarily includes their being enlightened in the knowledge of God himself; and as the prophet is not speaking of the calling merely of particular persons, but of nations, so his expressions evidently characterise the nations of the Gentiles, and at the same time foretell the speedy success of the gospel: "Nations *that knew not thee* shall *run* unto thee."

II. Though this 55th chapter does not speak expressly of the enemies of the mystical David, whom it describes, yet ver. 2 contains remarkable expostulations and re-

bukes, directed to people who are represented as spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfies not, and as very backward to hearken to God when offering to make an everlasting covenant with them. But in chap. 56 the prophet is more express and particular. After mentioning the happy times when God's house would be "a house of prayer for all people," he foretells the blindness and spiritual slumbering of certain persons, to whom he gives the titles of *watchmen* and *shepherds*, ver. 10, 11,—titles which characterise the Jewish teachers or rulers, or both.

III. When the extraordinary person spoken of in the 55th chapter is called by the name of *David*, that title, especially when joined with other predictions, to be considered afterwards, affords a probable argument that that person was to descend of the house of David, though the expression may also import that David was an eminent type of him; and, as was observed before, though it were supposed possible, without divine inspiration, to foretell such an enlightening of the Gentiles as is known to have been the effect of the gospel; and even to foretell that that event would be owing in a peculiar manner to one particular person; yet it would be evidently impossible to foretell, without inspiration, that that person would have any concern in the family of David more than any other.

IV. As to doctrinal characters, this chapter, as well as those formerly considered, teaches us, that that eminent person would be in a peculiar manner the author of the mercies contained in God's everlasting covenant; that he would not only be the universal priest and prophet, (as was proved from former predictions,) but also the *leader* and *commander;* (which implies, his being the

king and *ruler* of the people of God, not only among the Jews but also among the nations of the Gentiles;) that God's thoughts and ways of mercy in the everlasting covenant would be far above ours, as the heavens are above the earth; and as to the efficacy and success of God's word, that it would be like that of the rain that comes down from heaven to fructify the earth.

V. As, in the former prophecies, the enlightening of the Gentiles, in order to their partaking of the blessings of God's covenant, is expressed by deliverance from prison and darkness; so here, after mentioning the efficacy of God's word, it is added, ver. 12, "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace;" which, together with the words immediately following, "the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands," shew how great a harmony there is between this and the above cited predictions, not only as to the facts and doctrines contained in them, but also as to the peculiar triumphant style in which the things foretold are commended as grounds of extraordinary joy and singing.

Isaiah xi.

Though this chapter does not contain such a variety of facts as some of the chapters formerly considered, yet as it foretells very plainly the enlightening of the Gentile nations, that "the earth would be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," ver. 9; so it is very clear and express in determining, that the particular person by whom that event was to be accomplished was to descend "of the family of Jesse," seeing immediately after the words now cited, it is added, that in that day there would be "a root of Jesse," which would "stand for an

ensign of the people;" and that "to it the Gentiles would seek," and that "his rest would be glorious," ver. 10.

If it be objected, that no argument can be drawn from this prophecy, as not being fulfilled, till the whole earth, or all nations, be filled with the knowledge of the true God; it is sufficient to answer, that as it is not said here that all nations would be enlightened or converted *at once;* and as the conversion of all nations necessarily implies the conversion of many nations, the prophecy may be justly considered as fulfilled, though not wholly, yet in such important branches of it as afford a strong argument for the conclusion in view; seeing it is an uncontested fact, that many nations have been filled with the knowledge of God long ago in the manner here foretold, viz. by the doctrine of one particular person descended of the house of Jesse; and therefore we must apply to this prophecy the general remark in the introduction, about things foretold but not yet fulfilled, viz. that such things cannot invalidate the proofs taken from things that are fulfilled, provided these things be applicable to Christ truly and peculiarly, and at the same time are of that nature that they could not be foretold by mere sagacity, or by chance; which is evidently the case when a prophet foretells that one of the family of Jesse would convert many nations of the Gentiles.

II. This general observation, about prophecies that are as yet only fulfilled in part, serves to give light to a remarkable prediction in the latter part of this chapter, beginning at ver. 11; where, immediately after mentioning the enlightening of the Gentiles by a root of Jesse, it is added, that in *that day*, which in the prophetic style signifies *in those times*, there would be a second recovery of the Jews from a general dispersion; which necessarily supposes, that there would be a second dispersion of that

people; a dispersion after their returning from Babylon; a dispersion that would exist in the times of the Gentiles, seeing, according to the prediction, it would be in those times that their restoration would happen; so that though this prophecy does not speak so clearly as some others of the unbelief of the Jews, yet it contains such a prediction of their dispersion, as is applicable truly and only to what happened after their rejecting the gospel.

III. As to facts relating to the life of the eminent person in view: besides his being twice mentioned as descended of Jesse, the expressions about his being "a branch that would come forth out of the stem, and out of the roots of Jesse," ver. 1 contains a remarkable intimation, that at the time of his coming into the world that family would be in a low condition, and, as it were, reduced to its primitive obscurity: which explication of these expressions is confirmed by the parallel expressions in Isa. liii. 2: "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground."

IV. As in the prophecies formerly cited, it is said of him who was to be the light of the Gentiles, that God would put His Spirit upon him, and make his mouth like a sharp sword; so here it is said of the root of Jesse to whom the Gentiles would seek, ver. 2, 4, "that the Spirit of the Lord would rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord;" and that he would "smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and that with the breath of his lips he would slay the wicked." And as in chap. 55 he is said to be a leader and commander to God's people, not only among the Jews, but also among the Gentiles, so the expressions in this chapter, which represent him as a judge, contain further confirmations of his kingly office.

Nor are the instructions relating to the consolation of God's people, which are so strongly inculcated in the above-cited prophecies, omitted in this; He of whom it is said, chap. 42d, that he would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, is said here, ver. 4, with righteousness to judge the poor, and to reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth; the word rendered *the meek*, signifying also *the humble*, or *the afflicted.*

V. The figures in ver. 6-8, about transforming the natures of the fiercest and most noxious animals, are justly applied by Christian interpreters to the transforming efficacy of the gospel on multitudes of sinners in the most barbarous nations; who, however fierce and intractable formerly, having received the love of the truth, learned of Christ to be meek and lowly. And though there are too many proofs from experience, that the predictions in this chapter, about the transforming and uniting efficacy of the gospel, have not yet had their full accomplishment; yet, as was observed before on another head, this cannot nullify the evidence arising from the partial accomplishment of those predictions on as many as have received the gospel in sincerity. Nor can it be denied, that the gospel has had considerable effect in producing the most friendly dispositions, between multitudes belonging to different nations that were formerly the objects of one another's general antipathy.

Daniel ii. vii.

Both the 2d and 7th chapters of Daniel treat of the four great temporal monarchies, and also of a divine kingdom to be established on earth, which is distinguished from all other kingdoms by various characters, and particularly by two that are evidently of a singular nature,

viz. that it would be a kingdom of universal extent, and of everlasting continuance; which characters sufficiently demonstrate, that these two prophecies are synchronous, and parallel to one another; or that they relate to the same times, and to the same series of events. That they are also parallel to the above-mentioned prophecies concerning the light of the Gentiles, will be evident, if we consider the principal contents of these two chapters.

In the 2d chapter, after mentioning the four monarchies, represented in the prophetic vision by the four parts of a great image, the kingdom that was to excel them all is represented by a stone cut out without hands, which afterwards becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth; which figures are explained, ver. 44th, that in time of the kings belonging to the fourth (viz. the Roman) monarchy, there would be a kingdom *set up by the God of heaven*, which would never be destroyed, but would stand for ever, and get the better of all other kingdoms.

In the 7th chapter, after mention of the four monarchies, represented by four different animals, the Ancient of Days is spoken of as sitting on his throne, with great majesty, innumerable thousands ministering to Him; and one who is called the *Son of Man* is represented as *coming to him* with the clouds of heaven, and as brought *near before him.* And it is added, ver. 14, that "there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him;" and that, "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

The following part of this chapter treats of the opposition to be made to this kingdom by powerful adversaries,

the success of those adversaries for a time, and the final victory to be obtained over them. But that which requires most particular consideration is, that this kingdom is spoken of all along as *the kingdom of the saints of the Most High;* and that remarkable title is given to it, in the compass of ten verses, ver. 18-27, no less than five times.

This shows that though the prophet Daniel uses expressions and images different from those used in the prophecies formerly considered, yet he speaks plainly enough of the same times of the enlightening of the Gentile nations; seeing he speaks of the times when the kingdom of saints, or worshippers of the true God, would be diffused through the nations of the Gentiles, even through all nations and languages; for though the name of saints is not always taken in the most strict sense, which signifies men endued with the image of God; yet even when it is taken in the more large sense, it implies men's being enlightened in the knowledge of God, their embracing his worship, and professing subjection to his laws; all which is included in the words of Moses concerning the nation of Israel, when he speaks of them as a nation of saints, Deut. vii. 6, and calls them *a holy people.*

And seeing Daniel speaks first of the *setting up* of the kingdom of the saints of the Most High, chap. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14, and afterwards of the opposition made to them by powerful adversaries, who are said to make war against those saints, to prevail against them, and to wear them out, chap. vii. 21, 25; and, last of all, of the total victory to be obtained over those adversaries, ver. 22, 27; all this shows that the prophet does not affirm that the extending and establishing of the kingdom of

saints was to be completed at once, but by degrees, after a considerable space of time, and much opposition.

As when the everlasting kingdom is called *the kingdom of the saints of the Most High*, it is implied that the subjects of that kingdom, the people of all nations and languages, would worship and serve the Most High; so when the people of that kingdom are said, in serving God, to serve him who is called the *Son of Man*, this must imply that the nations of the Gentiles, in embracing the true religion, would embrace the laws and doctrines delivered by that Son of Man; which proves that he must be the same extraordinary person who, in other prophecies formerly considered, is represented both as enlightening and ruling the Gentile nations, in order to make them the saints of the Most High; and is described, even in those other prophecies, not only as the universal priest and prophet, but also as the universal king, or leader, commander, Isa. lv. 4, lawgiver, Isa. xlii. 4; xxxiii. 22, and judge, Isa. xi. 4, of the people of God in all nations.

From all which it follows that, as when two different historians, though using different expressions, describe the person they write of as the founder of the Greek or Roman empire; that one singular character is sufficient, both to prove that they write of the same person, and to show whom they mean; the same thing may be said of different prophecies, or of different parts of one prophecy, describing the person spoken of as the founder of the kingdom of God among the nations of the Gentiles, or among the several nations of the earth.

II. Whereas the prophecies formerly considered speak more expressly of the unbelieving Jews, as enemies of him who was to be the light of the Gentiles, the prophet Daniel, in the chapters in view, speaks chiefly of

the powers of the Gentile nations, as opposing the kingdom of the Son of Man, or the kingdom of the saints of God: for seeing these powers are represented in chap. ii. 34 as broken by that kingdom, this naturally supposes that they would be for some time engaged in a stated opposition to it; and the adversaries described in chap. vii. 24, 25, compared with ver. 8, are represented, not as belonging to the Jewish nation, but to the fourth great empire of the Gentiles, and even as appearing at the time when that fourth empire was to be divided into ten kingdoms.

If we compare that 25th verse of chap. 7 with the 7th verse of chap. 12, it will be evident that both these passages speak of the same times, viz., the latter times of the fourth or Roman empire; in which times, as was proved already, the Gentile nations were to be enlightened. And the last of these two passages, speaking expressly of a *scattering of the power of the holy people* that was to be accomplished in those times, it is at least highly probable that this is meant of a dispersion of the Jews that was to happen, and was also to come to an end in the times of the enlightening of the Gentiles.

III. As to facts relating to the personal history of the extraordinary person in view, it is of considerable importance that the above cited passages determine the time of his coming into the world, in so far as they contain more proofs than one that it would be in the time of the fourth or Roman monarchy; for, as in chap. ii. 44, after mentioning the kings belonging to that fourth monarchy, it is said expressly that it would be in the times of these kings that God would set up the everlasting kingdom; so in chap. vii, 13, 14, it is after an account of the four monarchies that the Ancient of Days is represented

as sitting on his throne, and the Son of Man as coming to him, with the clouds of heaven, and brought near before him, and receiving dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people and nations should serve him.

This passage not only shows that the setting up of the everlasting kingdom was to happen in the times of the fourth or Roman monarchy, but also that it would happen when the *Son of Man* would ascend from earth to heaven; for, as that title implies that the person to whom it is given would be truly a man, and consequently, as to his first residence, an inhabitant of the earth;* so the prophet does not represent him as coming in the clouds from heaven to earth (as at the general judgment), but as coming with the clouds of heaven from His former residence, towards the throne of God, which, according to scripture-style, is heaven: And this is confirmed by the words immediately following, "that they brought him near before him," viz., before the Ancient of Days.

It was observed above, that though, in reasoning with unbelievers, it is needful to distinguish betwixt uncontested facts and such supernatural contested facts as Christ's resurrection and ascension; yet predictions of these contested facts, besides other important uses, serve to prove the harmony of different prophecies, as treating of the same persons and events, because they contain the same extraordinary and singular characters. Hence it follows, that if we meet with other prophecies which speak of some extraordinary person as ascending into heaven, as Psa. lxviii. 18, or, which supposes such ascension, sitting at the right hand of God, as Psa. cx. 1, we have good ground to conclude that these prophecies speak

* See Psalm cxv. 16.

of that person whom Daniel represents as coming with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days, and as *brought near before him.*

Though the above cited prophecies in Isaiah do not speak expressly of the person whom they describe as ascending to heaven, yet they say that after great humiliation, and a violent death, he should rise from the dead, and see the travail of his soul; that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands; that he should be exalted and extolled very high; that he should make intercession for transgressors; and that he should be the universal prophet, priest and king, of the people of God in all nations. All these things prove such a harmony between the prophecies in Isaiah and Daniel, as produces strong conviction in other cases; as when various witnesses, testifying to one series of events, or one complex fact, a part of which has been seen by all, and other parts of it only by some; in which case, each of the witnesses telling all he knows, in some things they will coincide; in other things, some witnesses will superadd something to the testimony of others, without contradicting it; and the various testimonies will so tally with one another that the whole makes up a consistent coherent narrative of the series of events inquired into.

Whereas, in chap. ii. 34, 35, the everlasting kingdom is represented by a stone, that grows afterwards into a great mountain, and fills the whole earth; and that stone is said to be cut out without hands; the first of these expressions is evidently applicable to the gradual propagation of the gospel, and gradual advancement of the kingdom of God on earth, from low beginnings, to that height of glory which the prophet describes so magnificently afterwards; and the words of Daniel have a manifest conformity with those of Isaiah in chap.

liii. 2, and chap. xi. 1. And the other expressions about the stone cut out without hands, contain a plain intimation of something extraordinary and supernatural in the beginning of that kingdom, or in the birth of that king who is spoken of in other prophecies under the notion of a stone rejected by some builders, but made by God the head stone of the corner, and of a precious foundation-stone which God would lay in Zion, Psa. cxviii. 22; Isa. xxviii. 16; Zech. vi. 11, &c.

IV. As to doctrinal characters, though Daniel does not expressly call the Son of Man God's covenant and salvation, which titles are given to the same person in Isaiah; yet as, in Isaiah, those mercies which are called *the sure mercies* of the mystical David, are mentioned as the mercies of an everlasting covenant; so in Daniel, chap. vii. 27, the happiness of the saints of the Most High is represented as consisting in the privileges of an everlasting kingdom, which is the kingdom of Him who is called the Son of Man. And whereas it may be objected, that this is not meant of the everlasting happiness of the individual members or subjects of that kingdom, but only of the kingdom itself, considered as a collective body, it is sufficient to answer at present, that, according to the most uncontested rules of interpretation, it is reasonable to explain the expressions in chap. vii. about the everlasting kingdom, by the expressions of the same prophet in chap. xii. 2, 3, about the everlasting life and glory promised to individual persons belonging to the kingdom of the saints of the Most High.

V. Though the more immediate ruler of that kingdom is called the *Son of Man*, yet it is obvious, that there is something very amazing in the prophetic description of the high honour and glory that should be given to him; as particularly when it is said, chap. vii. 14, that "there

was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, nations, and languages *should serve him;* and that his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Whoever considers these expressions with impartiality and candour, whatever be his sentiments otherwise about the person spoken of, must own, that there is at least some difficulty in conceiving how such everlasting glory and dominion should belong to any one who should be no more than the son of man, or a mere creature; and particularly in conceiving how such magnificent things should be ascribed to one who was no more than the son of man, by such authors as the prophets, who inculcate so strongly and justly, that all mere creatures are, before God, as nothing, and less than nothing.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE PROPHETS CONCERNING THE MESSIAH, AND THE HARMONY BETWEEN THAT AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE APOSTLES.

In considering the harmony between the doctrine of the prophets and the apostles, concerning the person, offices, and benefits of the Messiah, it is of importance to have in view two general things concerning that doctrine, declared by the prophets themselves: First, That the more full and clear revelation of it was reserved for that future state of the Church which they foretell; and, secondly, That the things contained in it are mysterious and incomprehensible, as surpassing all that "eye has seen, ear heard, or ever entered into the heart of man to conceive; God's thoughts and ways of mercy being far above ours, as the heavens are above the earth; so that in one of the chief prophecies that ascribe the highest titles to the extraordinary person in view, the first thing mentioned concerning Him is, that "his name should be called Wonderful."

Whereas the gospel-doctrine concerning the person of the Messiah consists of two chief branches; first, That He is a divine person, not the only divine person, (as the Sabellians maintained), but one of three distinct persons in the Deity, the Son of God, sent by the Father to accomplish our redemption; and, secondly, That for this end He was manifested in the flesh, or

assumed a human nature into an everlasting personal union; it may possibly be objected, that it is not so suitable to consider this doctrine, in a defence of the common cause of Christianity, in regard of the controversies about it among those who adhere to that common cause; it is a sufficient answer to this, that, on the one hand, it is not possible to give a tolerable account of the doctrine of the prophets concerning the Messiah, without considering their doctrine concerning His person; and that, on the other hand, the most considerable of those who have differed from the body of Christians about this mystery, have taken it amiss to be accused of denying the Messiah's divinity; professing, that they only differed from others in the explication of it, and that they owned Him to be a divine person incarnate.

In proving that the prophets teach the Christian doctrine concerning the Messiah, it is needful to show—1. That they teach the doctrine of a distinction of persons in the Deity; 2. That they teach the doctrine of a divine person incarnate; and, 3. That they ascribe to that divine person the singular and distinguishing characters which, in the prophecies formerly considered, are ascribed to Him who was to be the light of the Gentiles.

1. As to the first of these important points, the proofs of it being so fully laid down in so many useful books which treat more directly on that subject, it is sufficient here to observe briefly, that some of the clearest of those proofs are contained in prophecies which ascribe divine titles or honours to one who is called the *Son of God*, Psa. ii. 7, or is said to be sent, Isa. xlviii. 16, Zech. ii. 9, anointed, Psa. xlv. 7, given, Isa. ix. 6, or raised up by God, Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, to be the messenger of God's covenant, Mal. iii. 1, to be employed by God in the salvation of His people, Hos. i. 7, to ascend on high, and receive

gifts from God for men, Psa. lxviii. 18, to be appointed by God to be a priest for ever, and to sit at the right hand of God, Psa. cx. 4, and to stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, and in the majesty of the name of the Lord, Micah v. 4; it being evident, that these, and the like Scriptures,* plainly teach a distinction between the Father and the Son, between Him who is said to send, anoint, give, or raise up, and Him who is said to be sent, anointed, given, or raised up; which last expressions manifestly denote some mysterious condescension to a subordination of office, relating to a great design, for the accomplishment of which that second divine person was to be *sent.*

2. As to the doctrine of a divine person assuming human nature, it is contained partly in some of the scriptures just now cited, partly in some others; and is either more directly asserted, or necessarily supposed, where a divine person, or one to whom divine titles or honours are ascribed, is said to be born, Isa. ix. 6, to be born of a virgin, Isa. vii. 14, to be born at Bethlehem, Micah v. 2, to be born or descended of the house of David, Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; and is expressly called *a man,* and is said to be betrayed, or sold, and pierced by men, and smitten by the sword of God,† and to be a priest for ever, Psa. cx. 4, after the order of Melchizedek,‡ or said to become visible to the bodily eye, and to stand on the earth, Job xix. 25, 27.

As these and the like Scripture-testimonies may be considered either *separately,* so as in thinking of one to lose sight of all the rest; or *conjunctly,* so as to compare

* See Gen. xix. 24.

† Compare Zech. xi. 13, xii. 10, and xiii. 7. Compare also Gen. xxxii. 24, 30, with Hos. xii. 3, 4.

‡ See Heb. v. 10.

such parallel places together; it is evident, that this last way is most suitable to the rules of interpretation; and at the same time sets before us a considerable number of concurring testimonies, which mutually support and fortify one another's evidence, in favour of the conclusion in view: which shows the rashness of those who suffer themselves to be determined by objections that have no manner of plausibility, if it is not against some one or two of so many testimonies considered apart from the rest; the invalidity of which objections is considered more fully in a more proper place. And it is evidently unreasonable to make general confused objections, as, "That by heaping many things together, people may prove any thing;" seeing it is impossible, that joining together ever so many true premises, should prove any but a true conclusion.

Whereas all the above-cited Scriptures contain characters of the divinity of the person they speak of, it is useful to divide them into different sorts, according to the diversity that appears in the other characters which they join with divinity. 1. Some of them join with characters of divinity, characters of the above-mentioned subordination of office, such as being *sent* of God, or the like, without speaking of incarnation.* 2. Others join with divinity, characters that suppose incarnation, without any other mention of distinction of persons, or subordination of office, than what may be necessarily implied in incarnation itself.† 3. Others join with divinity both the other characters; subordination of office, and incarnation. Whence it follows, that the two first classes of

* See Psal. ii. 7; Isa. xlviii. 16; Zech. ii 9; Psa. xlv. 7; Mal. iii. 1; Hos. i. 7, cited above.

† See above, p. 47, note 2.

Scriptures, being parallel to the third, must be also parallel to one another; and, therefore, whatever Scriptures speak of a divine person as sent of God, must be meant of Him, of whom it is foretold in so many other Scriptures, that He would be sent of God, and would assume human nature. Which reasoning is evidently founded on the so often mentioned rule of interpretation,—that more general and indefinite expressions should be explained by those that are more special and particular.

According to the same rule, the above-cited passages should be improved in explaining some others, which, though they do not contain the above-mentioned characters of mission or incarnation, yet speak of a divine person, as coming in an extraordinary and peculiar manner to the world, or to Zion, so that the cities of Judah should be called to behold Him, as in Isa. xl. 9, 10. But various other proofs of the harmony between this and the above-mentioned prophecies will come under consideration afterwards.

If it be objected, that the above-mentioned subordination of office must include inferiority of nature, and is therefore inconsistent with divinity: in answer to this, how mysterious soever this doctrine be in other respects, it is evident that that objection is contrary to reason and experience; seeing in many other cases persons of the same nature and dignity may send one of their number to act in their name, as well as his own, in a design of common concern.

3. In proving that the prophecies which speak of a divine person incarnate, are meant of the same person whom the prophecies formerly considered describe as the light of the Gentiles, it is needful to have in view the principles formerly laid down, concerning the evidence which proves, in other cases, that different writings, or

different parts of one writing, treat of the same person: in which proof it is neither sufficient nor necessary, that the different writings that are compared design the person they speak of, either by the same name, or by any proper name at all; seeing, on the one hand, many different persons may have the same name;* and, on the other hand, characters that are of a peculiar and singular nature (as, for instance, when one is described as the founder of such or such a famous empire) are convincing proofs that descriptions containing such characters relate to one and the same person. It is obvious, that it is not necessary that every one of the passages compared contain all the characters mentioned in the rest; but that any one character that is absolutely singular is a proof of the harmony in view; though no doubt the greater the number of such characters is, the greater is the evidence.

Whereas if all the prophecies which speak of a divine person incarnate expressly affirmed his being the light of the Gentiles, the conclusion in view would not need proof; for wise and holy ends, the prophecies are so contrived as to make it necessary that men should *search the Scriptures*, by *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*, 1 Cor. ii. 13. But there is no ground to complain of the want of abundant evidence, seeing so many of the singular characters which the prophecies formerly considered plainly appropriate to the light of the Gentiles, are ascribed, in the prophecies now under consideration, to a divine person incarnate; and even in some of them that mysterious character is joined with characters which directly imply the enlightening of the Gentiles.

One of the most remarkable prophecies of this kind is that in the 2d Psalm. It is obvious at first view, that

* See Heb. iv. 8.

the high titles and honours ascribed in that psalm to the extraordinary person who is the chief subject of it, far transcend any thing that is ascribed in Scripture to any mere creature: but if the psalm be inquired into more narrowly, and compared with parallel prophecies; if it be duly considered, that not only is the extraordinary person here spoken of called *the Son of God*, but that title is so ascribed to him as to imply, that it belongs to him in a manner that is absolutely singular and peculiar to himself, seeing he is said to be begotten of God, ver. 7, and is called, by way of eminence, *the Son*, ver. 12; that the danger of provoking Him to anger is spoken of in so very different a manner from what the Scripture uses in speaking of the anger of any mere creature, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little:" that when the kings and judges of the earth are commanded to serve God with fear, they are at the same time commanded to kiss the Son, which in those times and places was frequently an expression of adoration; and particularly, that whereas other Scriptures contain awful and just threatenings against those who trust in any mere man, the Psalmist expressly calls them blessed who trust in the Son here spoken of; all these things taken complexly, and compared with the above-cited prophecies, make up a character of divinity: as, on the other hand, when it is said, that God would set this his Son as his King on his holy hill of Zion, ver. 6; these, and various other expressions in this psalm, contain characters of the above-mentioned subordination which was proved to be appropriated to that divine person who was to be incarnate.

As to characters importing the enlightening of the Gentiles, there is a remarkable harmony between the

singular characters that are given here of the kingdom of the Son of God, and the characters, in prophecies formerly considered, of the kingdom of Him who was to be the light of the Gentiles, who is called in Daniel vii. *the Son of Man:* and that both as to the nature and extent of that kingdom, and also as to the opposition that would be made to it, and the final victory that would be obtained over all opposition. As to the nature of this kingdom; they who refuse to submit to it are represented as refusing submission to God, and as endeavouring to cast off his yoke: "Let us break *their* bands asunder and cast away *their* cords from us," ver. 3; where the relative particle relates both to God and to his anointed, or his Messiah: and, on the other hand, they who are the subjects of this kingdom, are supposed to be instructed to serve God with fear; which implies, that they would be *enlightened* in the knowledge of God; and that this kingdom is that kingdom of the saints or servants of the Most High spoken of by Daniel. This is confirmed by the account given of the extent of this kingdom, ver. 8, 10, where God is represented as saying to his Son, I will "give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession: and it is added, ver. 10, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; *be instructed,* ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear." These passages show, that the psalmist is prophesying of the time when the nations of the Gentiles, or of the Heathen, and even the kings of these nations, should be enlightened in the knowledge of God; and that he speaks of the same person sent by God, of whom Isaiah says, that he would be God's salvation, and the leader and commander of God's people, in all nations, even to the ends of the earth; and that he would make kings to arise and worship,

and that kings would listen to him with attention and reverence;* and of whom Daniel says, that he would receive honour and glory; that all nations and languages should serve him, and in serving him should serve God. The harmony between David and Daniel in the account they give of the opposition that would be made to the universal kingdom which they describe, and of the total defeat of that opposition, will be evident to any who compares the above explained passages in Daniel ii. and vii. with the second and ninth verses of this 2d Psalm, and particularly Dan. ii. 34, with Psalm ii. 9.

Though the prophecies formerly considered concerning the light of the Gentiles, and those now under consideration concerning a divine person incarnate, did not coincide in so many singular characters, it deserves particular attention, that that one mysterious character necessarily includes all other characters which imply incomparable dignity and glory; it being evident that when once it is supposed that a divine person would become a man, it behoved that man "in all things to have the pre-eminence," Col. i. 18, above all other men whatever; that he would be employed in more glorious undertakings, clothed with more excellent offices, and would have a title to incomparably greater honour and glory, than either any mere man, or any mere creature in the universe. Now, it was proved before that those characters which necessarily denote *incomparable dignity and power*, are included in the prophetic description of the glory and exaltation of him who was to be the light of the Gentiles; whence it follows that the two sorts of prophecies which we are comparing, viz., those concerning the light of the Gentiles, and those concerning

* See above, on Isa. xlix. lii. lv.

a divine person incarnate, are but different descriptions of the same extraordinary person.

The peculiar importance of this point deserves that we should consider the abundant evidence we have for it more particularly. Though *none* of the above mentioned secondary characters of *incomparable dignity*, such as universal and everlasting authority over other men, and the like, were expressly ascribed to the divine person in view, it behoved them *all* to belong to him, and even to be peculiar to him; because it would be impiety to suppose that any other man should either excel or equal that mysterious person, all other secondary characters of pre-eminence in glory being included in that primary character which we have in view. But besides all this, a good many of those characters of dignity and glory which were formerly considered as ascribed to the light of the Gentiles, are evidently ascribed, in the prophecies we are now considering, to a divine person incarnate, as will appear by the following comparison of them.

On the one hand, in the prophecies formerly considered, it is said of the light of the Gentiles, as to the work in which he was to be employed, and the offices with which he was to be invested, that he was to be God's covenant and salvation to the ends of the earth, which was proved to imply that the blessings of that covenant and salvation would be in a peculiar manner owing to him, which is more fully explained when it is said he was to be the universal prophet, priest, and king of the people of God in all nations; was to give his soul to be a sacrifice for the sins of many, to make intercession for transgressors, and to sprinkle many nations; and was also to be the leader, commander, judge, and ruler of all nations; whose dominion would be an ever-

lasting dominion, which should not pass away, and his kingdom that which should not be destroyed. 2. As to his exaltation, it is foretold that he would be exalted, extolled, and be very high; that he would be glorious in God's eyes, and that God would glorify him, in causing the nations to run to him; that he would ascend to God in the clouds of heaven, and receive honour and glory; that all nations and languages should serve him; that though he would have powerful enemies, who would war against, and for a time seem to wear out and prevail against his subjects, the saints of the Most High, yet he would at last utterly subdue and defeat them. And, 3. As to the benefits he would bestow on his people, which benefits are included in the more general expressions above mentioned, it is foretold more particularly that by him people would receive justification, peace with God, and spiritual healing, Isa. liii.

On the other hand, as to the divine person who was to be incarnate, it is foretold as to his work and offices, that by him God would bring about the salvation of His people, even their everlasting salvation, Hos. i. 7; that all the ends of the earth would look to him for salvation, Isa. xlv. 17, 22; that he would be in a peculiar manner the *messenger of God's covenant;* and he is represented as the *delight* of God's people, and consequently known by them, and revealed to them in former prophecies under that character. It is foretold in Isa. ix. 7, that of "the increase of his government and peace there would be *no end,* upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it, from henceforth and for ever;" and, agreeably to this, it is said, Psa. xiv. 6, that his throne would be for ever and ever; all which expressions show that his kingdom is that which Daniel represents as everlasting and universal.

It is foretold in Psal. cx. that he would be a ruler in the midst of his enemies, and a judge among the heathen, or Gentiles, and a priest for ever; which things are said of him while he is represented as sitting at the right hand of God; and as his being called a priest necessarily implies oblation, so his administering the priestly office at God's right hand, and that for ever, is only applicable to perpetual intercession for transgressors, in a state not of suffering but of the highest exaltation. And when, in Psa. ii., the blessedness of the nations, in being given him for an inheritance, is represented as the fruit of his *asking* this of God; by the best rules of interpretation, that *asking* must be explained by the above mentioned sacerdotal intercession, which is represented as an appointed intermediate cause of the blessings of God's kingdom and covenant. 2. As to his exaltation it is foretold that he would ascend on high, Psa. lxviii., sit at the right hand of God, Psal. cx., stand and feed (which feeding includes ruling) in the strength of the Lord, and in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, Mic. v. 4; and that though he should have enemies, he should rule in the midst of them; that he would gird his sword on his thigh, in his glory and in his majesty. Psa. xlv. 3; that in his majesty he would ride prosperously (like a conqueror riding in triumph through an enemy's country); that he would make the people to fall under him; and that he would sit at God's right hand until God would make his enemies his footstool, And, 3, As to his particular benefits, it is foretold in Isa. xlv. 24, 25, that men would acknowledge that in him surely they had righteousness and strength; and that in him all the seed of Israel should be *justified*, and should glory. And when it is said, Psa. lxviii. 18, that he should receive gifts for men, even the rebellious, that

the Lord God might dwell among them; this implies that they should be not only enlightened in the knowledge of God, but also that, how rebellious soever they had been formerly, they should be brought to a state of peace and reconciliation with him.*

These descriptions contain abundant evidence, that the extraordinary person spoken of in the different prophecies that we are comparing, was to be employed in the glorious work of the redemption of a sinful and rebellious world, not only revealing, but purchasing, procuring, bestowing, on the people of God of all ages and nations, all the blessings of God's everlasting covenant and salvation; which characters are, at the same time, the most distinguishing and singular, and the most glorious characters, that any person clothed with human nature can be supposed capable of; and relate to the most noble undertaking for which a divine person incarnate can be supposed to be sent into the world.

It may probably be objected, that though the abovementioned reasons prove, that all the characters of incomparable glory, ascribed to the light of the Gentiles are included or connected with that one character of a divine person incarnate; yet the same reasons seem to prove, that characters of extraordinary humiliation and sufferings ascribed to the light of the Gentiles, must be inconsistent with that mysterious character. It may in part answer this objection, that the humiliation is truly glorious both in respect of the noble design of it, the redemption of the world, and the exaltation that was to follow upon it, including incomparable dignity at the throne of the Ancient of Days in heaven, together with unbounded empire over all the nations on earth: but

* See Amos iii. 3.

that which turns the objection into a positive argument in favour of the conclusion in view, is the description given in so many of the prophecies we are now considering, of a divine person incarnate, as condescending to such humiliation and sufferings as the prophecies formerly considered ascribe to the light of the Gentiles. And indeed it is by such characters of humiliation we prove, that the divine person spoken of in several of the prophecies in view was to be incarnate. Thus, as it is said of Him who was to be the light of the Gentiles, not only that He was to be rejected, wounded, bruised, abhorred, despised by men, and particularly by the Jews; but also that it would please the Lord to bruise Him, to put Him to grief, and to make His soul a sacrifice for sin: so in the prophecies about a divine person incarnate, it is foretold, not only that he should be sold, despised, undervalued, smitten on the cheek, pierced by men, particularly by the inhabitants of Jerusalem; but also that he should be smitten by the sword of God, which was to awake against Him, Zech. xi. xii. xiii.

Thus the two classes of prophecies which we are comparing, viz. those about the light of the Gentiles, and those that speak of a divine person incarnate, contain the same singular characters of extraordinary exaltation and glory, and of extraordinary humiliation and sufferings: and as it was of use to consider those two points apart by themselves, on account of their peculiar importance; so they pave the way for running the parallel between the two sorts of prophecies in view, in the method observed in the former chapter, by showing the harmony between them in the following particulars: 1. Their speaking of the times of the enlightening of the Gentiles; 2. Their harmony in their account of the enemies of the extraordinary person they speak of; 3. And of facts

relating more directly to the history of His life; as well as in, 4. The doctrinal characters they give of Him; and, 5. In the principal figures by which they express these facts or doctrines; together with, 6. The consolations, and other practical instructions, which they mix with these things.

1. Though all the above-cited passages relating to a divine person incarnate, do not expressly call Him the light of the Gentiles; yet there are several things, either in these passages themselves, or in the contexts to which they belong, which show that the times of the enlightening of the Gentiles are the times they treat of.

Thus in Psa. lxviii. whereas ver. 18 speaks of a divine person ascending on high, the context, in ver. 32, speaks of the time when all the kingdoms of the earth would sing praises to the Lord, which supposes their being enlightened in the knowledge of Him; and particularly ver. 31 speaks of "princes coming out of Egypt; and of Ethiopia, as soon stretching out her hands to God."* The 110th Psalm speaks expressly of the same person as a priest for ever at the right hand of God in heaven, and as ruling at the same time among the Heathen or Gentiles on earth. In the 9th of Isaiah, which, in verse 6, contains one of the clearest prophecies concerning a divine person incarnate, it is said, ver. 2, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined;" where the expressions, importing the enlightening of the Gentiles, have a manifest resemblance to the expressions on the same subject in Isaiah xlix. 9, and chap. xlii. 16, formerly explained. Whereas in Isaiah xl. ver. 3, 4, and 9 are evidently parallel to

* See Acts viii 37, &c.

Mal. iii. 1, both these places speaking of the coming of the Lord after a forerunner has prepared the way before Him; and in the 9th verse of this 40th of Isaiah, Zion and Jerusalem are once and again said to bring good tidings, and are commanded "to lift up their voice with strength, to lift it up, and not to be afraid; to say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God:" the context, verse 5, shews, that in this chapter the prophet is speaking of the times when the glory of the Lord should be revealed, and all flesh should see it together. In Isaiah xlv. which treats of the Lord, in whom Israel should have righteousness and strength, and in whom they should be justified, and should glory, the prophet shews, that he is speaking of the time when "all the ends of the earth should be called to look to the Lord, that they might be saved," ver. 22; and to shew that he is not speaking of a calling of the nations without any effect or success, it is added, that "the Lord had sworn by himself, and that the word was gone out of His mouth, that unto Him every knee should bow, and every tongue should swear," verse 23; which prediction agrees with what is foretold in ver. 16, 17, about the overthrow of idolatry, and about Israel's being saved *in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation.* In Micah v. whereas ver. 2 speaks of the ruler in Israel, whose goings forth were from of old, *from everlasting*, and who was to come out of Bethlehem; ver. 4 tells us not only that he would feed in the strength, and in the majesty, of the name of the Lord his God; but adds, "For now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth:" which proves, that the prophet speaks of the times when the ends of the earth, the remotest Gentile nations, should be enlightened in the knowledge of God, and of the greatness of His majesty. And as the above-cited three contiguous chapters in Zechariah speak of a divine per-

son incarnate in a state of humiliation, the last of these chapters* speaks of the overthrow of idolatry; and the first and the last † of them speak of the breaking of the covenant between God and the people of the Jews, and of a general and extraordinary desolation that was to befall that people; which must be understood of what happened in the times of the enlightening of the Gentiles; because the desolation by the Babylonish captivity was past before the time of Zechariah's prophecy.

II. As to what is foretold in the prophecies in view, concerning the enemies of that extraordinary person whom they speak of, several things relative to that subject are anticipated in the remarks that have been made already on the chief contents of those prophecies. ‡ It is sufficient to add at present, that in Isaiah viii. 14, the Lord of hosts is said to be for a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to both houses of Israel, at the same time that He is said to be for a sanctuary to some other people; which must be meant of those who are not of the house of Israel, but of the nations of the Gentiles: and that in Isaiah xlv. 24, where it is foretold, that men should say, "Surely in the Lord I have righteousness and strength," mention is made of some who would be incensed against Him, and should be ashamed. So usual it is with the prophets, in handling this subject, with the most encouraging promises to mix awful threatenings; the design of which is, to give merciful warnings concerning the danger of neglecting so great salvation.

III. As to facts relating to the life and death of the extraordinary person in view, there is a remarkable harmony, as has been proved in part already, between the

* Chapter xiii. 2, 8, and 9. † Chapter xi. 10.

‡ See on Psalm ii. Zech. xi. xii. xiii.

two sorts of prophecies we are comparing, as to the account they give of the time when that person was to come into the world, of the family of which he was to descend, of the place of his residence, and his humiliation and sufferings; and it adds greatly to the force of the general argument, that the prophecies relating to a divine person incarnate, are more special and particular on some of these heads, than the other prophecies formerly considered, besides their containing some new facts which those other prophecies do not mention.

As to the time of that great person's coming to the world, when Malachi says, that the messenger of the covenant was to come to his temple, it supposes, that he was to come during the standing of the second temple, it being in the time of that temple that Malachi prophesied. In Isaiah xl. it is supposed, that he was to come while Jerusalem and the cities of Judah subsisted, seeing these cities are called to behold him: And whereas the name of Zion, when understood to denote a particular place, signifies the Church of God in Judea or Israel, to which that name was originally appropriated; and is applied to the converted Gentiles, as acceding to the communion of that church, and incorporated with her; it is not only foretold, that the Messiah should be appointed king in Zion, Psa. ii., but that God would send the rod of His strength (the Messiah's strength) out of Zion, Psa cx. 2; which is equivalent to the prediction, Isa. ii. 3—that when the nations should flow into Zion, it should be by means of a law coming out of Zion, and the word of the Lord coming from Jerusalem; plainly implying that the doctrine that was to enlighten the Gentile nations was to come from Judea; and consequently, that the revealer of that doctrine was first to publish it there, and that he was to come to the world

during the time that Judea was, in a peculiar manner, the seat of the visible church: So that such predictions concerning Zion, contain intimations, not only concerning the place of the Messiah's residence and public ministry, but also concerning the time of His coming.

Whereas the prophecies considered in the former chapter, about the light of the Gentiles, foretell, in a more general way, that He was to spend His labour among the Jews in vain, Isa. xlix. 4, which supposes His residing among them, and also that He was to descend of the house of Jesse; the prophecies that have been considered in this chapter, foretell more particularly, that he was to be born in Bethlehem, and was to descend of the family of David, Micah v. 2; Jer. xxiii. 6.

The prophecies in Isa. xl. and Mal. iii., contain several facts relating to the Messiah's forerunner; particularly, that he would not only call men to prepare for the coming of the Lord, but that he would have success in his preaching; that he would actually prepare the way of the Lord before him; that he would appear but a very little time before the Lord, the Messiah himself; for after mentioning the sending of that inferior messenger, it is added, that the Lord, the messenger of the covenant, would come *suddenly* to his temple, Mal. iii. 1. And whereas, in framing conjectures, it might appear more probable, that a forerunner proclaiming such tidings would rather publish them in populous cities, it is expressly foretold, that he would be a voice crying in the wilderness, Isa. xl. 3.

The different sorts of prophecies that we are comparing agree in general predictions concerning the Messiah's humiliation and sufferings: The prophecies considered in this chapter are, in several points, more particular than those that were considered formerly. The 11th of

Zechariah contains several minute circumstances, evidently applicable to the history of Judas's treachery. The person who is there said to be betrayed or sold, for a very inconsiderable price, is called *the Lord;* the betrayer is represented as voluntarily offering his service to those who were to employ him; and not only is the price of that treachery very precisely specified, viz. thirty pieces of silver; but also the particular use to which that sum was to be applied in the event; it was to be bestowed on the potter's field. When it is said, "Cast it into the Potter's field;" that singular way of speaking seems to be a hint at the effect of Judas's remorse, causing him to cast away with indignation what he had before grasped at with so much greediness. The more minute some of these things are in themselves, the greater is the evidence of divine fore-knowledge in the prediction of them; because the conformity between the prediction and the history is so much the more circumstantial.

IV. As to doctrinal characters, which are to be considered apart more fully afterwards, it is sufficient to observe at present, that the two classes of prophecies in view agree in describing the Person they speak of, as a person of singular and incomparable righteousness himself, and as the source of righteousness to others. As in the first class he is called God's righteous servant, who should have righteousness for the girdle of his loins, Isa. xi. 5, and should make many righteous, or justify many, Isa. liii. 11; so in the second class he is called the righteous Branch, the Lord our righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, in whom his people should have righteousness and strength, Isa. xlv. 44.

As to the instructions concerning divine consolations, and the uncommon exaltation and triumph of God's

people, so oft mentioned in the prophecies formerly considered, instructions of the same nature abound also in prophecies concerning a divine person incarnate; as will be evident to any who considers Isa. xl. 1, 2, 9, compared with Isa. lii. 7, 9; li. 3; Zech. ii. 10.

And whereas the prophecies concerning the light of the Gentiles tell us, that he would feed his people as a flock; that he would cause them to feed in the ways; that their pastures should be in all high places; that he that would have mercy on them would lead them, and that by the springs of water he would guide them; as also, that his mouth would be as a sharp sword; that he would be as a polished shaft hid in God's quiver; and that with the rod of his mouth he would smite the earth and with the breath of his mouth he would slay the wicked:* the very same figures, borrowed from the work of shepherds, and from the weapons of warriors, are made use of in the prophecies considered in this chapter, particularly in Isa. xl. 2; Mic. v. 4; Psal. xlv. 3; cx. 2.

V. It is of manifold use, in this essay, to observe the harmony between the doctrine of the prophets, and of the apostles, in various other articles, besides what relates more directly to the Messiah's person; and though some of these other articles have been taken notice of already, yet this matter is of importance enough to deserve more particular consideration.

It has been proved already, as to the Messiah's offices, that, according to the Old Testament predictions, he was to be the universal prophet, priest, and king, of the people of God, in all nations and ages of the world; and particularly, as to his priestly-office, that the Old Testa-

* See Isa. xlix. 9, 10, 2; & xi. 4.

ment contains the same mystery of redemption that is far more fully revealed in the New. It is of importance to observe, that there is a far greater number of passages in the prophecies relating to this doctrine than what some are apt to imagine, seeing it is by this doctrine that we must explain the passages where, without express mention of the Messiah's sacrifice and intercession, the prophets speak of him as a priest, as a priest for ever, as a king and priest on his throne, Zech. vi. 13; as sprinkling many nations, Isa. lii. 15; as being God's covenant and salvation to the ends of the earth, Isa. xlix. 6, implying evidently that he was to be in a peculiar manner the author of the blessings included in God's covenant and salvation; and where they speak of men's being blessed in him, Psal. lxxii. 17, yea, of all nations being blessed in him, Gen. xxvi. 4; of the mercies of the everlasting covenant as his mercies, Isa. lv; of the blood of the covenant as that which brings prisoners out of the pit where there is no water, Zech. ix. 11, which in Scripture-style signifies relief from the greatest misery; of the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1; of finishing the transgression, making an end of sin, making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24; of the Messiah's being to be cut off, but not for himself; and, in general, all the passages which speak of his humiliation and sufferings, or which speak of his people as the ransomed or redeemed of the Lord, Isa. xxxv. 10; li. 11; lxii. *ult.*

That these various passages, and others of the same nature, are to be explained by the doctrine of redemption is evident from the common rule of interpretation so oft mentioned formerly, that passages more obscure and general should be explained by those that are more plain and particular. Now the more general expressions of

the prophets,* which represent the Messiah as the cause and author of salvation and happiness, in a manner *entirely peculiar to himself*, cannot be otherwise explained or accounted for than by the doctrine of redemption; especially when we consider, that the Messiah's revealing and confirming the doctrine of salvation are characters that it behoved him to have in common with many others; whereas it is never said, nor can it be said, of any of these other teachers, that they themselves are God's covenant and salvation, Isa. xlix. 6; or that the mercies of God's covenant are *their* mercies, Isa. lv. 3. The singularity of the style and expressions of the prophets concerning the influence of the Messiah on the salvation of sinners, proves that the thing itself would be of a singular and extraordinary nature; and besides all this, several of the passages just now cited, if we consider the contexts which they belong to, will be found to speak either of the light of the Gentiles, or of a divine person incarnate. Thus Zech. ix. 9, 10, speaks of an eminently righteous king of Zion, having salvation, speaking peace to the heathen and ruling to the ends of the earth. In Zech. xi. xii. xiii. the prophet speaks of a divine person incarnate, and in a state of humiliation, besides other characters peculiarly applicable to the times of the gospel.† And Dan. ix. treats expressly both of the coming of the Messiah, and of the desolation of Judea that should happen after his coming, as will be made appear more fully afterwards.

It was hinted above, and it is needful to have it in view all along, that the prophets themselves, instead of saying that God's righteousness and salvation were revealed (or fully declared) by them, speak expressly of

* See above, p. 139. † See Zech. xiii. 2, 9.

these things, as things that were to be revealed* at a remarkable future period of time, to which they carry forward the expectations of the church and people of God. Nothwithstanding this it may be truly said, that the mystery of the gospel is contained in the writings of the prophets, Rom. xvi. 26; and that not only in the passages which come nearest to a direct assertion of that mystery, but also in the passages from which that mystery may, by just consequence, be deduced.

Whereas the doctrine of the Messiah's benefits is necessarily connected with that of his offices, and is in substance the same in the writings of the prophets and of the apostles, it is of importance to consider this matter more particularly, for refuting false notions concerning the predictions of the Messiah; as if, in the literal sense, they described him only as a temporal deliverer. As the prophecies concerning the humiliation and sufferings of that extraordinary person are utterly inconsistent with the Jewish notions of a temporal Messiah, so the prophecies concerning the glory and exaltation of that person are applicable only to that spiritual and heavenly glory formerly explained and proved.

The above-cited prophecies about the Messiah's offices prove, that he was to bring his people into a state of salvation, including the following three comprehensive benefits, together with their necessary concomitants and fruits. 1. A state of spiritual light and divine knowledge; and particularly of the knowledge of God's covenant and salvation, and of his infinite love, grace and mercy, towards sinners themselves, through the Messiah, which knowledge is the more immediate effect of the Messiah's prophetic office. 2. A state of peace and favour with God, including remission, reconciliation, and

* See Isa. liv. 1, &c.

justification before God, access to him, and acceptance with him; which things may be more peculiarly ascribed to the Messiah's priestly office, Isa. liii. and xlv. at the end. 3. A state of holiness and purity, subjection to the law of God, and conformity to his will, in which true liberty consists, and which, together with the most desirable safety and protection, is the effect of the kingly office of a sovereign of so great power and glory, joined with so great kindness and mercy to his people, Isa. iv.

Concerning these comprehensive benefits it is proper to observe, first, that as the above-cited prophecies affirm the Messiah to be in a peculiar manner the cause and author of the blessings of God's covenant, so when the prophets explain more particularly what these blessings of God's covenant are, it is not temporal advantages, but the spiritual comprehensive benefits just now mentioned, that they insist on; as will be evident to any who will consider Isa. lv. 2, 3, 7, &c.; lix. 21; Jer. xxxi. 31; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, &c; and other passages to the same purpose. It is not worldly wealth, honour, or conquest, that these passages insist on as the blessings of God's covenant; but God's causing his people to know him, from the least to the greatest; his bestowing abundant pardon; his being merciful to our iniquities, and remembering our sins no more; his putting his law in our inward parts, and writing it on our hearts; his sprinkling clean water on us, to cleanse us from our filthiness and our idols; his giving us new hearts and new spirits; his taking away the stony heart, and giving a heart of flesh; his putting his Spirit within us, and causing us to walk in his statutes; his giving us his word and Spirit, so as those inestimable blessings shall never depart from us, nor we ever depart from God, Isa. lix. 21. As all the things signified by that useful variety

of expressions are evidently included in the three comprehensive benefits above mentioned, namely, the true knowledge of God, the favour of God, and the image of God; so it is by these things that the Old Testament, as well as the New, explains the nature of true blessedness or happiness:* while on the other hand, it teaches, that it is in the Messiah that sinners shall be blessed; which is evidently contained, not only in the passages where it is more expressly affirmed, but in the various passages which assert the above-explained doctrine of the Messiah's offices, and particularly his priestly office. And it is proper to observe, that though the Scripture had not affirmed that true blessedness consists in the things in view; yet it might be proved from the chief principles of natural religion itself; it being evident, that nothing can give full and solid satisfaction to the chief desires of the soul, without joyful contemplation of God's infinite glory, joined with well-founded hope of his favour, (which, when bestowed on a sinner, necessarily implies remission of sin,) together with conformity to him in holiness.

When the Apostle Paul speaks of the righteousness which is of God by faith in Jesus Christ, he tells us, that the law and the prophets bear witness to it: but at the same time he distinguishes betwixt the gospel *manifestation*, or more clear discovery of that righteousness, and the prophetic *testimony* given to it. After mentioning what he calls the righteousness of God, Rom. iii. 21, 22, he explains it by what he adds afterwards about justification freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in his Son. In order to see the harmony between the prophets and the apostles in the doctrine of justification, it is proper to observe, that in the Old Testa-

* Psal. xxxii. 1; xxvii. 4; cxix. 1; & lxv. 4, 5.

ment, as well as in the New, justification is taken in what is called the *forensic sense;* or, that it signifies, acquitting or assoilzieing a man by an act of the authority of a judge; and that it is opposed to condemnation, as will be evident to any who duly considers the passages cited at the bottom of the page.* These passages show, that justifying a wicked person, which is said to be an abomination to the Lord, cannot be the same thing with sanctifying him, or making him really good and holy; but passing a sentence of absolution in his favour: so that in the Old Testament, as well as the New, justification and sanctification, though inseparable, are distinguished from one another.

The harmony between the doctrine of the prophets and the apostles as to the ground of justification, is evident, partly from the account which the prophets give of the evil deserving of sin,† and of the necessity and efficacy of the Messiah's sacrifice; and partly from their expressions concerning that righteousness of God which was to be revealed, or more clearly discovered, in the days of Messiah; which expressions are neither applicable to that infinite eternal justice which is an essential attribute of the divine nature, nor to that inherent holiness, which is so absolutely necessary, and is the chief perfection of our natures; but are very applicable to what the Messiah was to do and suffer for the redemption and justification of sinners. That it is not the essential righteousness of God that is meant in the passages in view, is evident; because these passages speak of a righteousness, which is indeed from God, but at the same time is supposed, in some respect, to *become ours;*

* Prov. xvii. 5; Deut. xxv. 1; 1 Kings viii. 31.
† Psa. cxxx. cxliii.

as when the Messiah is called, "The Lord *our* righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6, and it is declared, that "surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness, and in him shall the seed of Israel be justified," Isa. xlv. 24, 25; and in Isa. lxi. 10. God's people are said to be clothed by Him with the robes of righteousness, and garments of salvation. Nor can it be said of God's essential justice, that it was not revealed, or clearly discovered, under the Old Testament; which is supposed to be the case as to the righteousness meant in the passages in view; of which it is said, that it would be revealed and brought in, in the times of the Messiah, Isa. lvi. 1; Dan. ix. 24; Isa. lxii. 1. Several of these reasons show, that it is not men's own inherent holiness, though absolutely necessary, that is meant in those passages; seeing the nature and necessity of that holiness is clearly revealed in the Old Testament, as well as in the New.

In order to show, that the justification taught by the prophets, includes not only freedom from condemnation and misery, but also a right to true happiness from God, and in the enjoyment of God himself, it is proper to observe, what is so oft mentioned by the prophets, as the sum of all the divine promises to those who take hold of the divine covenant, namely, that He will be their God, and that they shall be His people, Jer. xxxi. 33; Hos. ii. 23; and that, suitably to this, His people are represented as His adopted children, or as standing in such a relation to Him as children are in to a father. Not only do the prophets teach, that God should be honoured by His people, as parents are honoured by their children, but also that God delights in them, loves, pities, and spares them, as parents do their children; particularly, that sinners employed in the exercise of true

repentance are pleasant children in His sight :* yea, that God's love to His people far transcends the most tender parental affection ; such as that of a mother to her sucking child, Isa. xlix. 15 ; that the happiness of His people is the object of His complacency, that He rejoices over them to do them good, Jer. xxxii. 40, &c. The titles given them are, HEPHZIBAH, BEULAH, or *Delighted in, Married, Sought out, Not forsaken,* Isa. lxii. 4. The usefulness of these things for proving that the prophecies contain the doctrine of immortality, or that God will not annihilate His people, but bestow the most lasting happiness on them, will be considered more fully afterwards.

As to sanctification, it was proved already, that the prophets speak of holiness, not only as our duty, made necessary by God's precepts, but also as a blessing promised in His covenant ; seeing it is a chief thing in the prophetic description of that covenant, that God promises to put His law in our inward parts, to write it on our hearts, and to cause us to walk in His statutes. But of this more afterwards, in speaking of the superior advantages of the New Testament church state.

The various concomitants and fruits of the benefits already mentioned, such as assurance of God's love,† peace of conscience, access to God, acceptance with Him, divine joy flowing both from the hope of God's favour, contemplation of His glory, and conformity to His will, perseverance and growth in grace, and the like spiritual blessings, are mentioned in the Old Testament as well as the New, as the blessings of God's covenant, and the fruits of the Messiah's undertaking and offices.

All these things abundantly refute the notion of a

* See Psa. ciii. 13 ; Mal. iii. 17 ; Jer. xxxi. 20.

† Isa. xlv. lvi. xxxv. xliv.

mere temporal Messiah; the enjoyments that have been mentioned as the Messiah's benefits being evidently of a spiritual nature, whether we consider the object, the causes, the means, or the effects of them. They give us the idea of a happiness, of which the objective cause is the manifestation of the glory and favour of God; the subjective ingredients, divine light, peace, love, with all the holy dispositions belonging to the new heart; the principal efficient cause, the Spirit of God; the outward means, the word of God, and the ordinances of His worship, making His people joyful in His house of prayer, Isa. lvi. 7; all which blessings are entirely different from outward posterity and greatness, and very consistent with the want of it. If some passages in the prophecies relate to particular seasons when God would give relief from persecution, and make His people taste of the comforts of outward tranquillity; seeing such events have actually happened in various times and places, and that in such a manner as has shown that it was the doing of the Lord, it was very fit that such things should have been foretold, though they are far from being the Messiah's chief benefits. If some predictions concerning the outward tranquillity of the Church are not yet fulfilled, this is no just objection, as was observed before, against other predictions that are fulfilled. And the notion of a temporal Messiah will be still farther refuted, in considering prophecies which foretell the persecutions of the gospel-church at her first erection, and in after ages.

Though the essential glory and gracious purposes of God are always the same; yet as the manifestations of the glory and favour of God, and our apprehensions and impressions of these things, admit of very different degrees, the highest degree constituting the heavenly blessedness; so the prophets give much the same account

with the apostles, of the superiority of the new above the old dispensation, in respect of more abundant measures of divine light and peace, holiness and joy.

As to the light of divine knowledge, the prophets foretell, that in the times of the Messiah that light would not only be more diffusive in extending to the Gentile nations, but also more full and clear. In Jeremiah's description, chap. xxxi. 34, which is one of the most remarkable descriptions of God's new covenant, and upon the matter the same with the new testament, or new dispensation of God's covenant in the last days, one of the principal things insisted on is a superior measure of divine knowledge by virtue of a divine teaching. And in various prophecies formerly cited, the times of the Messiah are extolled as times when God's righteousness and salvation should be revealed, Isa. lvi. 1 ; when the righteousness of Zion should break forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth, Isa. lxii. 1 ; when the glory of the Lord should arise on Zion, Isa. lx. 1 ; and when the Sun of righteousness should arise with healing in his wings, Mal. iv. 2.

As that light, which was to be far more clear, as well as more extensive, in the times of the Messiah, was to be a light discovering God's incomprehensible mercy and grace to sinners, and so causing God's righteousness and salvation to break forth as brightness, it is evident, that it behoved superior measures of such light to tend to greater degrees of the most solid peace and purest joy. Accordingly, in Isa. liv. 13, great measures of divine peace are mentioned as the effect of divine knowledge and instruction: and in other prophecies formerly cited, we are told that the chastisement of our peace would be laid on the Messiah, Isa. liii. 5 ; that he himself would be the Prince of Peace ; that of the increase of His government

and peace there would be no end, Isa. ix. 6, 7; that His people should go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; that the mountains and hills should break forth into singing before them, and all the trees of the field clap their hands, Isa. lv. 12; that in His days the righteous should flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth, Psa. lxxii. 7.* Such increase and abundance of divine peace, is the native fruit, not only of superior measures of divine light, discovering the grounds of the sinner's peace, hope, and joy, but also of the actual accomplishment of the promises concerning divers glorious causes of peace and salvation; particularly the Messiah's sacrifice, finishing the transgression, making an end of sins, and making reconciliation for iniquity; opening a fountain for taking away sin and uncleanness, and of the promises concerning his intercession as a high priest for ever at the right hand of the Majesty on high, Psa. cx. 4, Heb. i. 3; and of larger measures of the divine Spirit, giving efficacy to the most perfect divine revelation.

As the Apostle Paul calls the New Testament dispensation not only the ministration of life and righteousness, but also of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8, 9, the prophets give the same view of that dispensation, when they speak of the times of the Messiah, as times when, in an eminent manner, the Spirit would be poured down from on high, so as to make the wilderness become a fruitful field, Isa. xxxii. 15. And in Isa. xliv. 3, after these metaphorical expressions, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground," a plain explication of these metaphors is added in the following words:—"I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing on

* See Psa. cx. 4; and Heb. vii. 1.

thine offspring; and they shall spring up as—willows by the water-courses." Seeing, therefore, it is an uncontested rule of interpretation, that the words of any writer should be understood according to his own definition or explication of them, in case he give any such explication, it follows, that prophetic figures, about pouring down waters and floods, Isa. xxxv. 7, xli. 18, must signify God's pouring down the influences or operations of His Spirit as well as the instructions of His word. And as, in the prophecy now cited, pouring down waters and floods evidently denotes new plenty, or abundance of the blessing promised; so in Isa. lix. 21, we have a clear proof, that the promise of the divine Spirit is not confined to the first age of the gospel-church, seeing it is said expressly, "This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." As these words may reasonably be conceived spoken to the Messiah, who is mentioned by the name of the Redeemer in the preceding verse, and whose people are called His seed, Isa. liii.; so the prophecies which speak of the Messiah as filled with the divine Spirit, Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3, speak of him as qualified by that means for communicating the fruits of the Spirit to His people. New degrees of the inward operations of divine grace, or of the divine Spirit, are included in Jeremiah's account of the new covenant, or new dispensation, when he describes it by promises of God's putting His law in men's inward parts, and writing it on their hearts. Though some measures of the sanctifying grace of God's Spirit were bestowed under the old dispensation, as is evident, besides other arguments, from scripture-prayers concerning that

blessing; yet that larger measures of it should be the distinguishing privilege of the new dispensation is hinted even in the words of Moses, Deut. xxx. 6, where circumcising the heart, in order to men's loving God with the whole heart, is mentioned as a blessing belonging to the latter days; which must be understood of greater degrees of that inestimable benefit.

This leads us to consider the prophetic account of future blessedness: for though that doctrine is not by far so fully or so clearly revealed in the Old Testament as in the New, by which life and immortality are said to be brought to light, or more clearly discovered; yet, besides various passages which either contain direct assertions, or come very near to direct assertions of that doctrine, there are many instructions in the Old Testament from which that doctrine may be inferred by necessary consequence; and that not only by more remote consequences from more general views of the divine perfections, but more immediate consequences from the divine promises. And as to the general question, Why the Old Testament does not reveal this doctrine more fully and clearly? it is sufficient here to refer to what is said in another part of this Essay, about the comparative obscurity of the Old Testament in general.

The passages in the Old Testament which speak more directly of a blessed immortality, may be usefully divided into those that speak particularly of the resurrection of the body, and those that speak only in general of a state of future blessedness after death. One of the most remarkable passages of the first sort is in Job xix. 25, 26, &c., where Job affirms in the strongest manner, that though the worms should destroy his skin and his body, and though his reins should be consumed within him, yet he should see God, his Redeemer; he should

see Him in his flesh; he should see Him for himself, and his eyes should behold Him, and not another (for him); he should see Him standing on the earth at the latter day: which expressions contain a very strong assertion of the re-union of the soul and body at the last day. And this literal meaning of Job's words is much confirmed by the uncommon solemnity of the introduction, ver. 23, 24: "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c.

In Daniel xii. 2, 3, it is said, that "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." As this passage contains a direct and plain assertion of the resurrection of the body, and of life everlasting; so, according to the known rules of interpretation, it is by this more particular passage that we must explain the more general expressions of the same prophet, in the forecited 7th chapter, ver. 18, where he tells us, that the saints of the Most High should possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. It is remarkable, that in both these passages the prophet makes use of the strongest expressions imaginable to signify perpetuity in the strictest sense,—*for ever* and *ever*.

In Isa. xxv. 8, after a magnificent promise, of God's enlightening and feasting all nations, which feasting must relate to the full satisfaction resulting from the blessings of God's covenant, it is said, "He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces: and though these words may

relate, not only to the actual bestowing of a blessed resurrection at the last day, but also to the clear revelation of it by the gospel; this does not weaken the argument from this text for a state of future blessedness, where death and sorrow shall be abolished for ever; without the hope of which blessedness there can be no true spiritual feasting, or full satisfaction, given to an immortal soul. Whereas this promise of immortality is expressed by way of threatening against death, it serves to give light to another threatening of the same kind in Hosea xiii. 14, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes:" where, seeing the same general truth, the abolishing of death, is repeated four or five times in so strong and emphatic expressions, it is a proof that the words are to be understood in the highest sense; which is at the same time the most literal sense they are capable of, and the most agreeable to parallel scriptures, particularly to those already cited.

Though Psa. xvi. 9, 10, is applied peculiarly to the Messiah, yet if we consider even the prophetical doctrine concerning the relations between Him and His people, He being their representative, their husband, and their parent,* there is a connection between His resurrection and theirs: and accordingly it is said, Isa. xxvi. 19, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead:" where it is evident, that men are represented as attaining to a most joyful resurrection

* See Isa. liii.; Psal. xlv. lxxxix.; Isa. lix. 21.

from the dead; and that by virtue of the resurrection of the dead body of some extraordinary person; who, by the best rules of interpretation, can be no other than the Messiah, who by saving men from sin, it behoved him to save them from death; which, according to the Old Testament as well as the New, is the fruit of sin.

The passages that have been mentioned, where the resurrection of the body is expressed by awaking out of sleep, and out of the dust, serve to give light to some other passages which are perhaps of themselves more obscure; as Psa. xvii. 14, 15, where the Psalmist distinguishes himself from those whose portion is only in this life, which must be the case of all men, setting aside the hopes of immortality; and adds, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." And Psa. xlix, where the Psalmist, after telling us, ver. 6, 7, &c. that men who trust in riches, cannot be redeemed or ransomed from death by their riches, so as to live for ever; he insinuates, that those who trust not in riches, but in God, have a more glorious prospect of futurity; and says triumphantly, ver. 15, "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he *shall receive me;*" and thence infers an exhortation against envying wicked rich men, because when they die they can carry nothing away; which exhortation can have no conceivable connection with that from which it is inferred, namely, the redemption of the Psalmist's own soul from the power of the grave, without supposing that as to himself death would not deprive him of all. And accordingly, ver. 14, speaking of the death of foolish and wicked men, he tells us, that "the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;" which, considering the foregoing words, must naturally relate to a very remarkable morning after

death. It deserves particular attention, that whereas these various expressions appear very obscure, considering the great importance of what is supposed to be the subject of them, there is previous advertisement given in the introduction of the psalm, which has a very peculiar solemnity in it, that the chief subject-matter of it is both of very great importance, and yet to be delivered in dark sayings.

As to passages which speak not directly of the resurrection of the body, but in general of future blessedness: In Psal. lxxiii. 24, the Psalmist says, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." It is the scope of the Psalm to shew the justice of the divine administration, notwithstanding the temporal afflictions of the righteous, and the prosperity of the wicked, not only for a part of their life, but sometimes their very death, it being observed ver. 4. that there are no bands in their death; which shews, that the desolation mentioned as in a peculiar manner the end of the wicked, ver. 17 and 19, cannot be meant, or at least cannot be restricted to any temporal trouble, or death itself, the common end of all, but must relate to a just punishment after death: all which evidently favours the common interpretation of the words, "and afterwards receive me to glory," as meant of heaven. And this is still further confirmed, by more expressions than one, in the following context; as, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" ver. 25, and, "Thou art my portion for ever," ver. 26; especially when this interest in God as his everlasting portion is considered as part of the answer to a former objection, "that he had cleansed his heart and hands in vain," because of his great afflictions in this life; and also as a relief from the ground of dejection mentioned in the

words preceding this claim of interest in God for ever, viz. "my heart and flesh faileth."

In Isa. lvii. 1, 2, the righteous are represented as blessed in their death, not only because they are taken from the evils of this life, but because they enter into a state of peace and rest; which rest is not described by inactivity, but is supposed only to be a rest from labour and trouble; seeing they who enter into that rest are said to walk in their uprightness, which evidently denotes activity in holiness.*

In considering some of the many instructions in the Old Testament, which without so direct assertion of the doctrine of immortality, contain principles whence that doctrine may by necessary consequence be deduced, it is of particular use to have in view some patterns of that kind of reasoning in the discourses of Christ and his apostles; and particularly Christ's argument against the Sadducees, taken from the books of Moses, to which these people's regard is said to have been in a great measure confined. It is a remarkable excellency of that argument, that it is founded on a general principle, which is not only of evident certainty, but also of evident importance in practice, for guarding against misapprehensions of God; namely, that when God makes strong declarations of great love and favour to any, (which is necessarily implied in his calling himself *their God* in a peculiar manner,) such declarations must not be supposed to resemble the empty expressions of love and regard too oft used among men, but must imply God's bestowing on His favourites a happiness worthy of himself, a happiness durable and complete, including deliverance in due time

* See more arguments, such as those taken from the translation of Enoch and Elijah, and from the writings of Solomon in books which treat more fully of this subject. See Ps. lxxxiv. at the end.

from all the fruits of sin, and consequently from bodily death itself. If people have an interest in God as their God, the most evident consequence of this may justly be expressed in the words of the Psalmist, Psal. lxxxiv. 11, that God will withhold no good thing from them, but will give them grace and glory. Much to this purpose is the apostle's reasoning, Heb. xi. 16, they "desire a better country, that is an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city:" implying, that it would argue dishonourable thoughts of God, to suppose that he should make so magnificent and ample declarations of love and good-will to any persons, as his special friends and favourites, if all this should have no more considerable effects than what takes place in this momentary life, and all should end in the total destruction of the very being of those favourites in a little time, by annihilation, after they had shared much less in the enjoyments of this life than many of God's adversaries. But on the other hand, God's preparing such a city and country, that is, an heavenly, shews, that his favours to his people are every way worthy of himself, and worthy of the declarations of his love and good-will to them.

These things shew, that the doctrine of eternal blessedness may be inferred from the above-cited passages concerning God's great favour and loving-kindness to his people, even though it were not so oft and so expressly affirmed, that that loving kindness is everlasting;* as also from the words of God himself concerning the incomparable worth of the blessings of his covenant; and particularly from that excellency of them which is so oft mentioned, as distinguishing them from temporal enjoyments, which satisfy not,† namely, that they abundantly

* See the above passages about adoption, p. 154, note. † Isa. lv. 2.

satisfy and fill the soul;* as also from the express declaration, Isa. lxiv. 4, that the things prepared for them who wait for God are incomprehensible, and surpass all that eye has seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived; especially when to all this we join the frequent divine calls to God's people to rejoice with an unspeakable joy, to which mere temporal grounds of joy bear no proportion.†

The doctrine in view has also a necessary connection with, or is necessarily included in, the very nature of some particular benefits of the Messiah, and particularly the great benefit of remission of sin; because the Old Testament, as well as the New, teaches, that death is the fruit of sin; and consequently remission of sin must include deliverance in due time from death. The force of this argument will be more evident, if we consider the doctrine of the prophets, not only concerning the Messiah's humiliation and sufferings as the cause of remission, but also concerning the completeness and perfection of that remission, which is declared in as strong general expressions in the Old Testament as in the New; as when it is declared, that the Lord will be merciful to his people's iniquities, and remember their sins no more, Jer. xxxi. 34; that he will separate their sins from them as far as east is from west, Psal. ciii. 12; that he will blot out their sins as clouds, Isa. xliv. 22; that he will cast their sins into the depths of the sea, Micah vii. 19; that though they be as crimson and scarlet, he will make them white as snow, Isa. i. 18; yea whiter than the snow, Psal. li. 7.

As the prophets speak of divine forgiveness, as complete and perfect, as of inestimable value, and as the end and effect of the sacrifice of the Messiah, whom they describe as a divine person incarnate; so they teach, that

* Psal. xxxiv. lxiii; Isa. lv. 2, 3; Psal. cv. † Isa xl. lv. xxxv. lx.

it is a benefit that is peculiar to the penitent, and has a connection with true blessedness.

Seeing all pardon granted by a sovereign is an act of grace, preventing a punishment which is due by a standing law for transgression; and which, without such pardon, would be the actual consequence of transgression, divine forgiveness must prevent a punishment which otherwise would be the effect of sin, either now or hereafter, or both.

It cannot relate merely or chiefly to preservation from temporal affliction, because this is not only manifestly contrary to experience, but also to many clear instructions in the Old Testament concerning temporal afflictions; shewing, that ofttimes penitent and pardoned sinners have a larger share of them than others; that they are consistent with pardon;* that they are even privileges belonging to adoption,† and consequently, in some respects, fruits of remission, and of the fatherly mercy of God, chastising his children for their good.

Divine forgiveness must therefore relate chiefly to the preventing of punishment in a future state. And if it be objected, that this may be done by annihilation, it is obvious, that this sort of pardon, if all men be supposed to be annihilated, must be a pardon common to all, whether they repent of sin, and have an interest in the Messiah's sacrifice, and the mercy of God, or not. And if it be objected, that supposing impenitent sinners to exist in a future state of punishment, it is a valuable privilege to escape such punishment by annihilation; in answer to this, it is evident, that deprivation of all good, and of being itself, though not the greatest punishment possible

* 2 Sam. xii. 10, 12; compared with Psa. li. 1, 2, 7; &c.

† Psa. xciv. 2; and lxxxix. 30; &c, compared with Heb. xii. 4.

is yet a very great punishment, inconsistent with the above-cited declarations of the perfection of pardon, and the many magnificent commendations of the great blessedness of those who partake of that benefit; the Scripture expressions, about the connection between pardon and blessedness, Psa. xxxii. 1, not admitting so low a meaning as mere freedom from misery; which negative blessedness, if it could be called blessedness, is no more than what stocks and stones are capable of.

The doctrine of adoption, even as it is explained by the prophets, necessarily implies, that God's children are entitled to a better inheritance than a life of some temporary comforts here, mixed with so much vanity and vexation of spirit, and ending in annihilation. In Malachi iii, where it is said, that God will spare those that fear him, as a man spares his son that serves him, it is declared, that they will be his in the day when he makes up his jewels; plainly pointing at a remarkable future period of time, when it would appear, more than ever, how much God's children are the objects of his complacency and good-will, and how much he has their happiness at heart. And as even the prophetic doctrine of sanctification implies, that the divine Spirit, in implanting divine love, kindles strong desires after God, "as the soul's portion for ever;" such desires, being both commanded, produced and promoted, by him who is able to fulfil them, cannot be eternally frustrated.* When it is declared, that God who dwells in heaven, dwells also with them who are of a broken heart, Isa. lvii. 15, his dwelling with them here is a sure pledge of their dwelling with him for ever hereafter; the consolations which, according to the Old Testament, as well as the

* See Psa. xxii. 26. "They shall praise the Lord that *seek him;* your heart shall live for ever."

New, are included in men's enjoying God's special gracious presence, being of a heavenly nature, and earnests of heavenly blessedness. All which is much confirmed by the strong declarations God makes, that he will never forsake his people,* it being the very last thing that can be implied in such promises, that he will not destroy them, by depriving them of being itself.

The doctrine of future blessedness is necessarily implied in many passages, where everlasting continuance is affirmed of the several parts and causes of salvation. For though it may be objected, that such expressions relate only to the perpetual continuance of the Church, and of the spiritual privileges of the Church, considered as a collective body, without inferring the perpetual happiness of individual members; it is evident, in answer to this, not only that the happiness of the whole Church, or of any society, consists in the happiness of the several parts or members of which it is made up, but also that everlasting continuance is affirmed of the blessings of God's covenant, in passages where those blessings are commended, offered, and promised, not merely to Zion as a collective body, but to particular persons, Isa. lv. 2, 3; Psa. xxii. 26; or where they are claimed by particular persons as their portion, Psa. lxxiii. 26. And in Psa. ciii. 17, the excellency of God's mercy to them that fear him, as being everlasting, is mentioned in opposition to the short continuance of human life here: what the Psalmist adds, about the extending of that mercy to the seed of such persons, being a confirmation of the continuance of it to those persons themselves. To which we may add, that the perpetual continuance of Zion, and of her privileges, considered as

* See Isaiah lxii. 12

a collective body, proves a future state; because the perpetual continuance of the present state of things is inconsistent with many instructions contained in the Old Testament, as particularly the expressions concerning the latter day, Job xix. 25; the last days, Isa. ii. 2, and the time when the heavens shall wax old as a garment, and be changed as a vesture, Psa. cii. 26. On all which accounts, we have abundant evidence, that expressions of everlasting continuance are to be understood in the highest and most natural meaning, when such continuance is affirmed, either of God's loving-kindness to His people, Isa. liv. 10, or of the righteousness brought in by the Messiah, Dan. ix, or of God's covenant itself, Isa. liv. 10, or of the light, Isa. lx. 19, 20, peace, Isa. ix. 6, life, Isa. xxxii, or joy, Isa. xxxv. 10; li. 11, promised in that covenant. And whereas the word *everlasting* is sometimes taken in a limited and lower sense, to denote only very long continuance, as when it is applied to mountains or hills, the prophet Isaiah in effect gives an express caution against that low meaning of the word, when it is applied to God's loving-kindness and covenant, Isa. liv. 10: "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord."

All these arguments receive additional strength from the doctrine of the prophets, concerning the chief intermediate causes of salvation; and particularly concerning the incarnation of a divine person, and his humiliation and sufferings, in order to the salvation of His people; which confirms the highest meaning of the prophetic expressions about the everlasting continuance of that salvation; seeing, if it consisted only in the benefits of a momentary life, whether spiritual or temporal, the effect

in that case would bear no proportion to the greatness of the cause. And indeed many of the strongest proofs of the point in view, may be drawn from the joint consideration of the principal prophetic instructions concerning the Messiah; as particularly concerning the divine glory of His person, considered in his highest capacity; His mysterious condescension in his incarnation and sufferings; the relations He stands in to his people, as their Father, their husband, their representative, which is implied in His substitution in their room in his sufferings; His resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of God, Psa. cx; and His living there for ever, Psa. xxi. xxii. lxxii.; His being a high priest there for his people for ever; His incomprehensible love to them, so clearly demonstrated by His sufferings for them; His continued intercession, manifesting the continuance of the same love that appeared in his oblation, on which his intercession is founded; all these things proving His eternal complacency in His people's happiness; of which it is said, that when He sees it, He sees the travail of His soul, and is satisfied. Nothing can be more inconsistent with such mysterious mercy and love, than to suppose, that the objects of it should be for ever cut off in a little time, one after another, by annihilation.

Various other confirmations of the point in view may be gathered from the instructions of the Old Testament, concerning the vanity of the enjoyments of this life; the impressions the ancient servants of God had of it; and their considering their present state in this world as a state of pilgrimage, Gen. xlvii. 9; Psa. cxix. Nor can anything be more just than the reasonings in the Epistle to the Hebrews on this head, Heb. xi.

CHAPTER III.

A COLLECTION OF THE CHIEF PROPHETIC CHARACTERS OF THE MESSIAH; AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOUNDING THE CHIEF REASONINGS FROM THOSE CHARACTERS.

In considering the prophecies concerning the Messiah according to the order of time in which the events foretold happened, for shortening and strengthening the proofs, that the prophecies to be adduced are meant of the Messiah, it is useful to collect, in one view, the chief characters of the person, and of the times of the Messiah, and of the prophetic style concerning Him, so far as these characters have been proved by passages already explained; and to class them under some general articles, to which proper references may be made in subsequent reasonings.

I. As to historical characters, it has been proved, that the Messiah was to descend of the house of David; that He was to be born and to reside in Judea, during the subsistence of the Jewish polity and temple, in the time of the fourth or Roman empire; that He was to live in a low station of life, to undergo great sufferings, and to be cut off by a violent death; that He was to enlighten the Gentile nations in the knowledge of the true God; and that though He was to be the light of the Gentiles, He would be rejected by the prevailing party among the Jews; who, after rejecting Him, would be dispersed by an entire dissolution of their civil polity.

II. As to doctrinal characters, it was proved, that, according to the prophets, the Messiah would be as a divine person coming into the world, in a singular manner, condescending to a subordinate office ; a divine person incarnate; the universal, the chief, the perpetual prophet, priest, and king, of God's people, in all ages and nations; particularly, that He would purchase and procure redemption from sin by His sacrifice and intercession ; that thus he would be, in a singular and peculiar manner, the cause and author of the blessings of God's covenant and salvation ; the fountain of spiritual light, life, healing, righteousness, peace, and holiness, incomparably fitted for His undertaking by the Spirit of God ; and that all characters of incomparable glory, dignity, and exaltation, above all mere creatures, are both expressly appropriated to Him, and connected with the primary characters which describe His person and offices.

III. As to the names and titles given him, it was proved, that He is oftener than once called by the name of *David;* a name that never belonged to any temporal prince in Israel after the Son of Jesse ; that He is sometimes called by the name of *the Branch;* that the titles of, *The Son of God, The Son of Man, The Prince of Peace,* and *The Messenger of the Covenant,* are appropriated to him in a peculiar manner.

IV. As to characters of the times of the Messiah, they are suitable to those of the Messiah himself, being described as the times of the enlightening of the Gentiles, and of the desolation of the unbelieving and impenitent Jews ; the time of the coming of the Lord in a singular manner to the world and to His people ; the time when there would be a fountain opened to take away sin ; when God's Church should be exalted to

higher degrees of spiritual privileges, of light, peace, holiness, and joy ; when God's righteousness and salvation should be revealed, or more clearly manifested, and the light of His glory arise and shine on Zion ; when glad tidings should be published to Zion, and spread from Zion to other places : and when such things should be done, as should make the day of the Messiah both a day of singular consolation and joy to God's people, and at the same time an awful or terrible day of righteous judgments against the incorrigible adversaries of His kingdom, particularly the abettors of heathenish idolatry and Jewish infidelity.

V. As to the most distinguishing characters of the prophetic style on the subject in view, it was proved, that it is usual with the prophets, in speaking of it, to break forth into very singular exclamations, calling on the several parts of the universe, particularly on Zion, and sometimes on the wilderness and the isles, to rejoice and sing; to express great revolutions that God was to bring about in the state of the world, and of the church, as to men's most important concerns, namely those of religion, by metaphors borrowed from the most extraordinary conceivable changes on visible things, and particularly to express the removal of great obstacles by levelling mountains: as also to express the Messiah's work, His qualifications for it, and His benefits, by metaphors borrowed from the office of shepherds, the sword and bow of conquerors, the beauty and benign influence of the light, and the various necessaries and valuable comforts of life, and pouring down of waters to fructify the ground. It is also observable, that the prophets sometimes speak of the Messiah as a person whom they suppose to be made known to God's people formerly, by

characters proper to make Him the object of their singular delight and desire.

It is useful also, for abridging and strengthening the reasonings in view, drawn from these and the like characters, to join together some general principles, on which these reasonings are founded, and to which it will be needful to make frequent references.

I. As was observed in the introduction, a prophecy is proved to be meant of Christ, if it agree to Him truly and peculiarly, and if the thing foretold could not be foreseen in a natural way. These things concurring at once prove the divine inspiration of a prophecy, and the truth of the Christian interpretation of it; which complex conclusion is the scope of the reasonings in view.

II. When a prophecy contains a character of the Messiah, (or, in general, of an extraordinary person to come) that is absolutely singular and distinguishing, and is at the same time an uncontested fact, applicable to the history of Jesus Christ, this of itself makes a proof of the conclusion in view, if the fact be a thing above human foresight. A character is absolutely singular and distinguishing, not only when it is of such a nature that it cannot, but when it is certain in fact that it does not agree to any more persons or events than one. Thus, for instance, the conversion of Heathen nations, (as distinguished from that of particular proselytes,) by a light from Judea, is an event of that kind, that it is not impossible in the nature of the thing but it might happen in different ages, but it is certain in fact, that it happened only in the ages after Christ's coming. On the other hand, that eminent character so often mentioned, the beginner, or first and principal founder of the kingdom of God, or of the worship of the true God among the Gentiles, is a character absolutely singular in the strictest

sense; it is not possible it should agree to many: and of this kind are several of the doctrinal characters of the Messiah above mentioned.

III. Though doctrinal prophecies are not direct proofs against unbelievers, of the truth of the doctrines which they assert; yet they may be said to contain uncontested facts, in so far as they contain facts relating to the faith and worship of the gospel-church, or of the worshippers of God among the Gentile nations; and if these facts have the properties that exclude human foresight, and are absolutely singular, they coincide with those mentioned in the former article.

When doctrinal characters that are absolutely singular are found the same in different prophecies, it is a proof that these prophecies are parallel, or that they treat of the same person or events. This can be proved the same way that we prove, in any other case, that the same thing is treated of in different writings, or different parts of one writing. Nor can any pretend, that such conclusions are incapable of convincing proofs; for that would infer that we cannot be sure that any two pages of one history treat of the same person. Where any proof, on such subjects, appears weak, it is because the characters that are supposed to be parallel are too general and indefinite; it is otherwise where they are absolutely singular.

IV. Characters which, of themselves, are of a common, general, or indefinite nature, and are applicable to many; when joined to a character that is absolutely singular, *increase* the evidence of divine foresight in a prediction, and of the true interpretation of it, by making the description more particular and circumstantial. Thus, for instance, many others were born at the same place with Jesus Christ, viz. at Bethlehem, in the same age, and of the

same family, and died the same kind of death; yet any one of these common characters, joined with that one absolutely singular character, *the Light of the Gentiles*, greatly increases the evidence of a prediction's proceeding from inspiration, and of its being meant of Christ: because, supposing it possible to foretell, by human sagacity, or by chance, that the Gentile nations should be enlightened, and that this should be chiefly and peculiarly owing to one particular person; yet it would be impossible to foretell at what time, or place, or of what family, that person should be born, or what death he should die.

V. When a character that is of itself common to many, is applied to one person by way of eminence, on purpose to distinguish and characterize him, it is the same thing in effect as to say, that that character agrees to that person in an eminent degree, or in a distinguishing and peculiar manner; by which means a character otherwise common and indefinite, becomes singular: of which there are numberless instances in other writings and discourses, as well as those of the prophets. Thus supposing *messenger of the covenant* to signify of itself the same things with *teacher of it;* yet when that character is appropriated to one person to distinguish and to point him out, it implies, that that character belongs to him in a singular manner, and that the bringing of God's covenant to the world would be owing to him in a peculiar manner. Thus also it is well known, when some have appropriated to one person the titles of *the Philosopher*, or *the Poet*, it implied that, in the opinion of the speakers, that person was the chief philosopher, etc.

VI. A complication of characters that are of themselves common and indefinite, may make a *singular description;* as a complication of features, each of which,

taken separately, may be common to many, is that which distinguishes one face from all others. Thus many others, besides Jesus Christ, were born at Bethlehem, descended of David, appeared in the world during the standing of the second Jewish temple, seventy weeks of years after the edict mentioned Dan. ix.; several others have professed themselves to be the Messiah, and have been acknowledged by some as such; many have suffered a violent death. None of these characters, taken separately, are absolutely singular; yet, taken conjunctly, they make a singular description absolutely peculiar to Jesus Christ. Though it may not be easy to determine precisely, by general rules, what must be the number and nature of indefinite characters, a complication of which *makes a singular description;* yet, in particular instances, ocular inspection ofttimes easily determines the matter; and it is evident in general, that as some characters are far less common and indefinite than others and come much nearer to singularity, the greater the number of such characters are, the more singular and distinguishing a description must be. Thus, to be born at Bethlehem, and descended of David, are characters that come nearer to singularity, than to be born in Judea and descended of the patriarchs; and therefore tend more to restrict the description of the Messiah to Jesus Christ.

VII. Coincidence in style, or a complication of coinciding expressions, phrases, metaphors, and figures, especially when it extends to a good many particulars, or when the expressions are in themselves of a more singular nature, affords at least an adminicular proof or confirmation, that different prophecies are parallel to one another, or treat of the same things; as it is certain in other cases, that such coincidence in different authors, when to a certain degree, will prove, that either the one

has borrowed from the other, or both from a third; or that a third has dictated to both. Where such coincidence is almost without any variation, as in several of the first verses of Isa. ii. and Micah iv. it is evident, at first view, without reasoning, that the passages compared are parallel, and from one source; but where the thing requires more laborious proof, it may notwithstanding be abundantly convincing.

VII. Prophecies are proved to be parallel to one another, if they are parallel to a third prophecy, or class of prophets. Thus prophets that are parallel to either of the two classes compared in the preceding chapters, viz. those concerning the light of the Gentiles, and those concerning a divine person incarnate, must be parallel to both of them: and in the present, as well as in other cases, contested truths, when once proved, may justly be made use of as principles on which subsequent reasonings may be founded.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PREDICTIONS CONCERNING THE MESSIAH CONSIDERED ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF TIME IN WHICH THE EVENTS HAPPENED.

SECT. I. *Of the Messiah's life, death, and exaltation.*

THOUGH some of the prophecies about the Messiah's forerunner were considered already, in speaking of the Messiah's person, it is needful here to consider the prophecies about that forerunner jointly, in order to apply to them the characters mentioned in the preceding section.

The 40th of Isaiah contains the following characters of the times of the Messiah:—the enlightening of the Gentiles, or the revealing of the glory of the Lord, so as all flesh should see it together; the coming of the Lord in a singular manner, to the world and to Zion, so as the cities of Judah should be called to behold him; his standing and feeding His flock like a shepherd; Zion's receiving the greatest consolation and joy, and publishing singular glad tidings: the Lord's producing singular revolutions and removing powerful obstacles, expressed by levelling mountains. It will be proved afterwards, that from the 40th of Isaiah to the end of that prophecy, we have almost one continued series of predictions relating to the times of the Messiah, setting aside a very few chapters concerning that deliverance from

Babylon, which also was subservient to the great events relating to the Messiah.

The extraordinary person mentioned in the 3d of Malachi, ver. 1, is described as a divine person, seeing he is called, *the Lord*, and the proprietor of the divine temple, which is called his temple. He is also described as condescending to a subordinate office, seeing he is called *a Messenger;* and his coming to the temple supposes his coming to the world in a singular manner. His being called by way of eminence, *The Messenger of the Covenant*, implies his being in a singular manner the author of the blessings of God's covenant; a character formerly proved to be appropriated to the light of the Gentiles. He is mentioned as one formerly made known to God's people, by characters fit to make him the object of their singular delight: and when this prophecy is compared with that last cited in Isa. xl. there appears a singular harmony and coincidence as to matter and style, about the coming of the Lord, and of one that was to prepare the way before the Lord.

The 4th of Malachi speaks of a singularly awful or terrible day of the Lord against incorrigible adversaries of his kingdom, and of a day of singular light, joy, healing, and growth, to God's people, or to them who fear God's name. The singular character of the Sun of righteousness and of healing in his wings, causing them that fear God to go forth and grow up as calves of the stall, denotes a benefactor of universal, or incomparably extensive benign influence, at once the source of light, the source of righteousness arising with healing and growth. Though in this prophecy the name of Elijah, who had left the world long before, is given to the Messiah's forerunner, resemblance in office, zeal, and temper, accounts for it: nor is there any thing more ex-

ceptionable in it, than in giving the name of David, who was dead long before, to the Messiah to come.

The facts contained in these prophecies about the Messiah's forerunner, were summed up in the former chapter.

II. The prophets give four remarkable signs of the time of the Messiah's coming, relating to the state of the Jewish nation, the Jewish Temple, the state of the heathen empires, and the number of years. They shew that he was to come, after the total dispersion of the ten tribes, and before that of Judah; during the subsistence of the second temple; in the time of the fourth or Roman monarchy; and about seventy weeks of years after a remarkable period mentioned in the 9th of Daniel. Though several prophecies relating to some of these signs were considered above, there are others which it is needful to consider in the present argument.

The extraordinary person whom Jacob calls *Shiloh* in Gen. xlix. is supposed to spring from the tribe of Judah; because it is of the peculiar honours and privileges of that tribe that Jacob is speaking. Whereas it is said that, "to him shall the gathering of the people be," this is one of those characters spoken of in the former section which, though of themselves, when abstractly considered, common to many, yet, when applied by way of eminence to a particular person, to characterise and distinguish him, must be supposed to agree to him, in the judgment of the speaker, in a singular degree and distinguishing manner. When Shiloh is described, as "he to whom shall be the gathering of the people," and when indeed this is almost all the description that is given of him, it is equivalent to a strong declaration, that that character should agree to him in a very peculiar and extraordinary manner, seeing it is supposed to be sufficient to point

him out. This character, thus understood, has a manifest connection with the above characters of the Messiah as a person of incomparable dignity and authority, and in a singular manner the object of the delight and desire of people of all nations; who was to spring of the tribe of Judah, as being the offspring of David. It is a confirmation of this, that the gathering which Jacob mentions is represented as voluntary; and that Shiloh is mentioned as an extraordinary person, formerly made known to Jacob's family; which, together with the coincidence of characters, shews that he is the person formerly promised to the patriarchs, as their seed, in whom all people or all nations, should be blessed: this including, that to such an universal source of blessedness all sorts of people would gather, these being characters naturally connected.

Then as to the time of His coming, it is foretold clearly, that it would be before the sceptre and lawgiver should depart from Judah, or about that time: and it is at least hinted, both that it would not be long before that departing of civil polity from Judah, and that it would be after its departing from the other tribes; for if it was to continue with them as well as with Judah till Shiloh came, the patriarch's words would not be suitable to the obvious scope and design of them.

The Christian interpretation of this prediction is farther confirmed by the singular coincidence of style in subsequent prophecies, where the subjection of nations to the Messiah is expressed by their gathering to him, or to the Lord, or to Zion.

Thus Shiloh is described in this ancient short oracle as an extraordinary person, of the tribe of Judah, formerly made known to God's people, who should be in a singular manner the honour of the people or tribe of whom he was to spring; to whom there should be an

incomparable gathering of people of all nations, in order to blessedness from Him; who was to come after the dispersion of the other tribes, and before, yet but a little before, the dispersion of Judah: which characters joined together, form a special and singular description, applicable only to Jesus Christ, and manifestly coinciding with other prophetic descriptions of the Messiah.

As to the real or seeming obscurities in this prediction, it is obvious, that different opinions about the meaning of the name of Shiloh cannot weaken the evidence of what is plainly affirmed of Him, no more than the uncertainty about the etymology of any other great man's proper name can make every branch of his history unintelligible; and the most probable meanings assigned to this word, such as "the Sent or Messenger, or the Peace-maker," are already proved to be peculiarly applicable to the light of the Gentiles, or the Messiah.

As to the objection, that the royal sceptre departed from the seed of Judah to strangers, before Christ came; it is sufficient to answer, that the sceptre mentioned is not called a royal sceptre; that to restrict it in that manner is adding to the text, and a begging of the question; that there is a twofold latitude in the words of the prediction, which vindicate it from the objection: First, That the words about the sceptre and lawgiver are applicable to the mere subsistence of the polity of the Jews, though governed by a stranger; as the sceptre of empire did not depart from the Romans when governed by Trajan, a Spaniard. Secondly, That the words, *until Shiloh come*, without straining them, may signify, either till after his coming, or till about that time; and, either way, the prediction contains proofs of divine foresight: as also, that the command laid on Judea to submit to Herod, an Idumean, did not happen till a little before

Christ came; and that actual submission, and swearing allegiance to that prince, did not happen till after Christ's coming.

In the 2d of Haggai, the prophecy about the coming of the Desire of all nations, is ushered in with a very solemn introduction, about the most extraordinary revolutions, relating to things of the highest importance, expressed by God's shaking "yet once the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;" and more particularly, "his shaking all nations." This itself is an argument, that the events which are the subject of the prophecy, are the most important that ever happened; which has been proved to be the character of the events relating to the Messiah. This is confirmed, both by the words "*yet once*," which cannot reasonably be reckoned superfluous, and, in their natural meaning, denote the absolute singularity of the divine work they relate to; and also by the repetition of that awful advertisement, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts," no less than six times within the compass of five verses; which singularity of style at once denotes the singular importance of the prediction, and directs us, in interpreting it, to have due regard to the character of the speaker; and implies, that he who is here called "*the desire of all nations*," must be one who, in the esteem of God himself, deserves that title, and ought to be, in a peculiar manner, desired and honoured by all.

This extraordinary character, thus appropriated by God himself, in so solemn a manner, to the eminent person in view, as fit to distinguish Him from all others, and plainly intimating His having been made known formerly by characters that should render him incomparably desirable to all nations, manifestly coincides with the above characters of incomparable beneficence

peculiar to the Messiah, to whom all nations would be beholden for the light of the knowledge of God, and for all the blessings of God's covenant, Isa. xlix.

The sequel of the prediction confirms this, by shewing, that the coming of the Desire of all nations would advance the glory of the second temple (however inferior otherwise) far above the first, and would even fill God's house with God's glory; plainly importing, that that eminent person should far transcend every former prophet, priest, or king, whatsoever; and that where His presence was, there the divine glory should reside in a peculiar manner. All which things necessarily coincide with the above mentioned characters of incomparable dignity and glory appropriated to the Messiah, as being not only implied in the prophetic doctrine about His person and offices, but also expressly ascribed to Him in various particular passages, shewing, that he would be glorious in the eyes of the Lord; that God would be glorified in Him, and that He would be glorified by God in a singular and peculiar manner; and that at his coming the glory of the Lord would arise on Zion, Isa. xlix. 55; lx. 1.

And whereas there is a remarkable promise added in the prediction, viz. "and in this place will I give peace:" for explaining this peace, it is needful to observe two things: first, that it is mentioned as a consequence of what was said before about the coming of the Desire of all nations, and about His transcendent glory; and, secondly, that it must signify something more than God's continuing the peace with Himself which His people enjoyed already; seeing the giving of peace which is here mentioned, is mentioned as a new privilege, belonging in a peculiar manner to the future times in view. All which shews, that this peace must be explained

by the above-cited prophetic instructions, about what the Messiah was to do for peace and reconciliation between God and sinners, and about the superior degrees of spiritual peace peculiar to the state of the Church after the coming of the Messiah, who is called *the Prince of peace;* of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end.*

The Christian interpretation of this passage in Haggai, is farther evident from its being so parallel to that in the 3d of Malachi; both these prophets describing the great person they speak of, as the object of the singular delight and complacency of God's people, and as coming to the second temple; for it was in the time of that temple, after the captivity, that both of them prophesied.

Daniel ix. 24, &c.

Whereas the prediction in the 9th of Daniel requires very particular consideration on various accounts, it will be proper to give a short explication of the chief branches of it, and to annex the proofs which support that explication, and vindicate the prediction from the charge of ambiguity.

The true meaning of the chief branches of this prophecy may be thus briefly summed up: 1. That from a certain edict for restoring Jerusalem, there would be seventy weeks of years, until the time of reconciliation for iniquity, etc. by the Messiah; 2. That from the edict, to the coming of the Messiah, there would be sixty-nine weeks in all, made up of seven weeks and of sixty-two; 3. That the city would be built in very troublesome times; 4. That after sixty-two weeks, reckoning not

* See also Psa. lxxii; Zech. xi.

from the edict itself, but from that which was the end and chief effect of it, viz. the completing of the restoration of Jerusalem, the Messiah would be cut off; 5. That after this, the city and sanctuary would be destroyed as with a flood; 6. That as to the seventieth week, or the last of the seventy, sixty-nine of which had been already spoken of, according to the partition made of them into seven and sixty-two, in that one week the Messiah would be employed in confirming the covenant with many; 7. and, That, in the midst of that week, or about three years and a half after the Messiah's beginning that public employment, (for confirming the covenant with many must be such an employment,) he would do that which would virtually abolish all ceremonial oblations.

As to the proofs of the first branch, though the first verse of the prediction does not say that the things it mentions, such as making reconciliation for iniquity, etc, were to be done by the Messiah: yet that this must be the meaning may be thus made out. The whole sequel of the prophecy treats of the Messiah; and the transition, ver. 25, "know therefore and understand," shews, that this and the following verses are designed for particular explication of what is mentioned in a more general way in the former verse, which is, as it were, an introduction to the rest. The sequel of the prophecy also speaks of three things relating to the Messiah, which were to happen about seventy weeks from the edict in view. According to ver. 25, the Messiah was to appear about sixty-nine weeks after the edict; according to verse 26, he was to be cut off after sixty-two weeks, or in the sixty-third, reckoning, not from the edict, but from that completing of the building of the city which was the design of the edict; and it will be fully proved afterwards, that after sixty-two years from the building, is the same with after

sixty-nine from the edict; and according to ver. 27, the Messiah, in the seventieth week from the edict, was to do that which would virtually abolish ceremonial oblations. Thus the year of the finishing of transgression, making reconciliation for iniquity, etc, the year of the Messiah's being cut off, and the year of his virtual abolishing of ceremonial oblations, do all three coincide. The expressions in ver. 24, contain an exceeding remarkable declaration of what was formerly proved to be one of the most singular doctrinal characters of the Messiah, relating to his priestly office. See what was said at some length upon this head in the former chapters, particularly chap. 1. on Isa. liii. and chap. 2, on the Messiah's sacrifice. All these things put together, prove abundantly that the beginning of this prediction in view, speaks of things that were to be done by the Messiah.

That the seventy weeks are not weeks of natural days but weeks of years, (such weeks being expressly mentioned in other scriptures,) is evident; because seventy weeks of days, amounting only to a year and four months, is vastly too short a time for the events here mentioned;—the giving out the edict for building up Jerusalem; the completing of that building, both as to walls and streets, and that in troublous times; the Messiah's coming; his confirming the covenant with many, which being to continue only for half a week, is itself a proof, that it is not weeks of days that the prophecy means; then his being cut off, and making the oblation to cease: besides that the close of the prediction insinuates, that it would not be long after the seventy weeks in view, when the city, the building of which was to be authorised by an edict only at the beginning of these weeks, should be again destroyed, and come to an end as with a flood.

That ver. 25 must be so pointed and read, that the first sentence shall run thus, "From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build up Jerusalem unto the Messiah the prince, shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;" and not, "shall be seven weeks; and sixty-two weeks the street shall be built again," etc. is not only agreeable to the best-pointed copies, and the judgment of the best critics, but capable of strict proof otherwise; Because, 1. To say, that from the edict to the Messiah there would be only seven weeks or forty-nine years, and to stop there, would be an evident contradiction to the very following verse, where the cutting off of the Messiah is put after sixty-two weeks, or 434 years, from the building of the city; which was not finished till long after the edict: 2. Because, by stopping at the words *seven weeks*, the last sentence in ver. 25, running thus, "and sixty-two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall," would have no meaning, unless it be supposed to mean, that it should take sixty-two weeks, or 434 years, to build the city; which is both contrary to fact, and would put the building of the city very near the destruction of it; and clashes with the whole tenor of the prediction; and, 3. after seven weeks from the edict, none appeared who professed himself to be the Messiah, and was acknowledged as such, and was cut off; whereas after seven and sixty-two, making in all ninety-nine weeks, all this happened.

As to the partition of the seventy weeks into three parts, viz. seven and sixty-two, mentioned in verses 25, 26, and one week, mentioned ver. 27, the prediction itself, if duly attended to, gives an evident reason for it. In ver. 25 it is said, that from the edict to the Messiah, there would be seven and sixty-two weeks, which makes sixty-nine. As this sentence makes the partition, (as

to its two first branches,) the two following sentences show the ground of it. The first following sentence says in general, that the building of the city authorised by the edict should be completed in troublesome times. The next sentence runs thus: "And after sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off." That the meaning is, "After sixty-two weeks from the building of the city shall the Messiah be cut off," may be proved thus, 1. In all other cases, such expressions, "After so many years," relate to the event or period mentioned immediately before. Thus, if one should say, that Rome was built by Romulus, and after so many years was burnt by the Gauls, the meaning would be, so many years after the building of Rome: Therefore seeing these words, "After sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off," come immediately after mention of the building of the city Jerusalem, the meaning must be, "After sixty-two weeks from the completing of that building." 2. The meaning cannot be, "After sixty-two weeks from the edict, Messiah shall be cut off;" because it was said before, that from the edict to the Messiah there would be sixty-nine weeks, or seven and sixty-two weeks. 3. Seeing these things prove, that it is the meaning of the prophecy that the Messiah would appear about sixty-nine weeks after the edict, and *after* sixty-two weeks from the building would be cut off, it inplies, that betwixt the edict and the building, there would be about seven weeks, or forty-nine years. It is useful to observe the probability of the thing itself, that it might take some such time after the edict, before the buildiug of so great a city, after so great and long desolation, could be so completed, in troublous times, that it might be said, that both the wall and the streets were finished. The distance of time betwixt the edict itself, and the full effect of it, seems to be

directly intended in the words of the prediction, both about troublous times, which is a hint at such obstacles as are recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah to have retarded the building; and also about building both the street and the wall; which specialty shews, that it is not the beginning of the building, but the completing of it, that is meant. And whereas the distance betwixt the edict, and its full effect, might be apt to discourage God's people, it was a very suitable preservative against this that they had previous advertisement of that distance of time by a prediction. But though we should abstract from all the reasons of the partition we are speaking of, it is sufficient for proving the chief conclusion, that the public appearance of the Messiah is put sixty-nine weeks from the edict, his death in the seventieth week from the edict, and *after* sixty-two weeks from completing the building of the city.

As what is said proves the first four branches of the above explication, the fifth, which relates to the destruction of the city and sanctuary, needs no proof, the prediction of that event being so clear and express in ver. 26, and repeated in the verse following: so that if there was any obscurity or ambiguity in the one, it would be sufficiently removed by the other.

As to the sixth branch, viz. that it would be in the seventieth week that the Messiah would be employed in confirming the covenant with many, it is sufficient to observe the following things. 1. That seeing the beginning of the prophecy mentions seventy weeks, and the sequel shews what would happen in the first seven, and after the following sixty-two weeks, making in all sixty-nine weeks, the *one week* mentioned ver. 27, must of course be the seventieth; it being very remarkable, that in ver. 26, it is not said, that the Messiah should be cut

off in the sixty-second week from the building, but *after sixty-two* weeks from that period: which, as has been proved, is the same thing as *after* sixty-nine weeks from the edict, or in the seventieth week. 2. When it is said, that He would confirm the covenant with many for, or in, that one week, it points out the beginning of His public ministry: and what covenant is meant, may be abundantly made out from the account given above of the prophetic doctrine about the divine covenant, especially when compared with the words of this prophecy, calling the covenant it speaks of, *The Covenant*, by way of eminence; intimating, that it was formerly made known by peculiar characters sufficient to distinguish it from all other covenants; and when to all this we add the strong expressions in this context concerning reconciliation for iniquity, the violent death of the Messiah, and the entire destruction of the city and sanctuary of the Jews, which of itself is a proof that the temporal greatness of that people was far from being the design of the Messiah's coming, or of His covenant.

When it is said, that "in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease;" that this is to be applied to the efficacy of the Messiah's death as a sacrifice for sin, virtually abolishing the Levitical sacrifices, is partly evident from what was proved before, as to the prophetic doctrine concerning the Messiah's death: from the doctrine and expressions in the beginning of this prediction on that head, and particularly the expressions about "finishing the transgression, and making an end of sin;" from the coincidence of the time of finishing the transgression, &c., of the Messiah's being cut off, and his abolishing oblations; all these things happening in the seventieth week: and this point will be farther confirmed in treating of the prophecies relat-

ing to the abolishing of the ceremonial law in the times of the Messiah.

If it be objected, that the Messiah's death happening in the midst of the seventieth week, shews, that what the prediction calls seventy weeks, is really but sixty-nine and a half; it is a sufficient answer to this, that it is exceeding suitable, not only to the prophetic style, but to common style in other cases, to express any considerable space of time in round numbers; and that the close of this prophecy is even surprisingly particular, in shewing, that the chief event foretold was to happen in the midst of the last of the weeks formerly mentioned.

The obscurity that may appear in some parts of this prediction, on a transient view, is no just objection against the evidence arising from a true explication of it, supported by sufficient proofs; no more than it is an objection against demonstrations in speculative sciences, that they appear so obscure to beginners, as that they can make nothing of them without a teacher or interpreter; whose instruction, without being the ground of assent, is a means of information, and of directing the attention to the connection of conclusions with their premises.

It is a chief cause of obscurity in the prediction in view, that whereas the seventy weeks are reckoned from an edict for restoring and building up Jerusalem, there are four edicts recorded in scripture to which these words, in their greatest latitude, may seem applicable, viz. the edicts in the first year of Cyrus, Ezra i; in the second of Darius, Ezra v. i, vi. 1; Hag. i. 1; in the seventh, Ezra vii. 7, and in the twentieth of Artaxerxes, Neh i. 1, ii. 1. To shew that this seeming ambiguity does not invalidate the proofs of the divine inspiration of the prediction, and of the Christian interpretation of it,

it is sufficient to observe the following things. 1. Though the prediction were understood to affirm only, that the events it mentions were to happen about seventy weeks after some one or other of these edicts, considering they are so few in number, this itself would be a proof of divine foresight in the prediction, and a more circumstantial determination of the time of the Messiah's coming, than some other abovementioned signs of that time, which, however, contribute much to the general argument in view; such as the signs relating to the subsistence of the Jewish nation and temple, and to the fourth or Roman empire. 2. There are some things in the prediction itself, which, when duly adverted to, give good ground for passing by the first two edicts. And as to the last two, it has been well observed by some, that Christ's death happened seventy weeks of solar years after one of them, and as many weeks of lunar years after the other. As to the edict in the first of Cyrus, this was the very year that the prediction was revealed, as appears from Dan. ix. 1; so that if that were the edict meant in the prediction, it would probably have been expressed to this purpose, "seventy weeks from this present time." Besides, the two first edicts speak only about the rebuilding of the temple, and removal of obstacles that retarded it; the edict of Darius being but a revival of that of Cyrus, without one word about rebuilding the city; whereas the prediction speaks about an edict for restoring and rebuilding the city, and the walls and streets, without one word about rebuilding the temple; though in foretelling the second destruction of the city, that of the temple is also mentioned. But, on the other hand, as to the third edict, viz. that of the seventh of Artaxerxes, though it does not contain the very expressions of Daniel's prediction, yet it contains things to which

these expressions are more applicable than to any edict merely relating to the temple. Sir Isaac Newton justly observes, that "the dispersed Jews became a people and a city when they returned into a polity or body-politic; and that was in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, when Ezra returned with a body of Jews from captivity, and revived the Jewish worship; and by the king's commission erected magistrates in all the land, to govern the people according to the law of God, and of the king," Ezra vii. 25.

These things shew, that there is one remarkable character mentioned in the prediction itself, which does not agree to the first two edicts, but is applicable to the third, namely, the authorising of the rebuilding, not of the temple merely, but of the city. But there is another character which perhaps is rather still more decisive. According to the prediction, the edict it mentions must be only seven weeks before completing the building of the city; for one and the same event, viz. the appearance of the Messiah, which is placed about sixty-two weeks after the building, ver. 26, is placed only sixty-nine weeks after the edict, ver. 25; which demonstrates, that the distance betwixt the edict and the building would be no more than seven weeks. No edict made sooner, can be the edict meant in the prediction. Now the two first edicts were made long before; the first near thirteen weeks, the other above ten weeks, before the building of the city was well begun; and consequently a much longer time before it was so completed that it could be said, as in the prediction, that both the wall and the streets were built: for these edicts were made at the distance of time now mentioned before the twentieth of Artaxerxes, Neh. i. 1, ii. 1; at which time it was told Nehemiah, that Jerusalem was still in a desolate condi-

tion, "the wall broken down, the gates burnt with fire, and the place of his fathers' sepulchres lying waste."— Whereas it has been objected, that the obscurity of this prediction is increased, both by the partition of the seventy weeks into so many parts, and by the comparative obscurity of the other edicts after that of Cyrus; which being both the first and the most famous edict, it is natural for readers, at first view, to apply the prediction to it; which application however clashes with the Christian interpretation: it is very useful to observe, that supposing all these things to be real causes of some kind of obscurity, namely, of that obscurity which is impenetrable by superficial attention, but is consistent with convincing evidence upon due search; all these reasons, elsewhere considered, for that veil of apparent obscurity that distinguishes prophecy from history, are proofs of wise contrivance in those very things in the prediction that are objected against. Granting that it is natural for readers, at first view, to apply the prediction to the edict of Cyrus, as being more famous than the rest, that edict is on that very account less suitable than the rest to prophetic obscurity: but then it must be remembered, that the edict really meant is proved to be sufficiently determined by intrinsic characters in the prediction, and especially from that which arises from that very partition that is objected against, namely, that the edict meant is that that would be made about seven weeks before the building described; which is a farther evidence of wise contrivance, seeing what at first view increases the obscurity, on due inquiry increases the evidence, and determines the meaning of the prediction.

As there is a very real difference betwixt rebuilding the temple, and rebuilding the city, the walls, and streets, and betwixt the edicts authorising these different

things; so there is an undeniable connection between these two truths: 1. That one and the same event, viz. the Messiah's appearance, would happen sixty-nine weeks after the edict, and about sixty-two after the building; and, 2. That the edict meant must be about seven weeks before the building; this position being a necessary consequence of the former. Yet both these differences and this connection having escaped some learned men, and being carefully observed by others, this has occasioned different sentiments about some parts of the prediction: but to pretend, that where there is diversity of sentiments, there can be no certainty, would introduce scepticism. As conclusions about the meaning of words may, in some cases, admit of as strict proof as any other conclusions whatever; so it gives great strength to the proof of the Christian interpretation of the prophecies in view, that it is founded on so many intrinsic characters in the prophecy itself.

But it adds greatly to the strength of the proof, that there is so manifold harmony between this prophecy and those formerly considered, both in doctrinal and historical characters; and particularly in the singular doctrinal characters included in the expressions about finishing the transgression, making an end of sin, and making reconciliation for iniquity, bringing in everlasting righteousness, and anointing the Most Holy; which anointing, mentioned after making an end of sin, etc. appears to be the same with the anointing with the oil of gladness, Psa. xlv, applicable to the Messiah's solemn inauguration at his exaltation. The title of *Messiah, the Prince*, given by way of eminence and peculiarity to the great person spoken of, denotes an anointed prince, of incomparable dignity and pre-eminence; which coincides with the above-explained characters of the supreme

and universal king, priest, and prophet: and the Son of Man, whom all nations should serve, mentioned in this same book of Daniel, chap. 7, "confirming the covenant with many," being almost the only work ascribed to the Messiah in this prediction, coincides with the singular characters of Him in other predictions, where He is called by way of eminence, "The Messenger of the Covenant," and "who was to be given for a covenant to the people," Mal. iii; Isa. xlix.

If we compare this prediction, not only with other predictions, but with the gospel-history, it will appear to contain a singular and circumstantial description of Jesus Christ, as one who would profess, and would be acknowledged to be the Messiah, and the Most Holy; who was to finish the transgression, and make an end of sin; who was to appear about seventy weeks of years from the abovementioned edict, and sixty-two after the rebuilding of the city, to be employed in public confirmation of the divine covenant with many, beginning that public ministry at the seventieth week; afterwards cut off by a violent death, and that in three and a half years; after which events, city and sanctuary should be destroyed by the people of a prince to come: concerning which some have observed, that it was not the Roman *Prince* Titus himself, but *his people*, against his intention, that destroyed the sanctuary: to all which we may add, that the actual abolition of ceremonial oblations is intimated in the words of the prediction about the virtual abolition of them that was to happen at the time of the Messiah's death: which things, taken together, being applicable to Jesus Christ, not only truly but peculiarly, and being far above human foresight, make this prediction a strong proof of Christianity, even when considered by itself;

but still much stronger, when considered in its relation to other prophecies.

But as no additional evidence on so important a subject can be superfluous; it is observable, that the scope and circumstances of this prediction, considered as a revelation made to Daniel at such a time, together with the angel's introduction to it, virtually contain such characters of the chief subject of it, as are not otherwise applicable than on the footing of the Christian interpretation. As in the foregoing context we find the prophet affected in the most sensible manner with the sins and calamities of God's people, importunately pleading for mercy to them, and greatly needing relieving and encouraging discoveries of the will of God; so the angel's first words imply, that his message was to be of that sort: fit to relieve the prophet's dejected mind; to shew that himself was greatly beloved, and his confession and supplications accepted: which, together with the angel's telling that he was made to fly swiftly, proves, that the *chief subject* of his message was not to be new grounds of sorrow, but glad tidings of singular importance. Now it is evident, that these characters of singular joy cannot be found in what is foretold about the outward state of the Jews, seeing what is said about rebuilding their city, is counterbalanced by the mournful account given of its second and total destruction. That rebuilding is mentioned in a short sentence by the by. The subsequent destruction is insisted on in a far more lively manner. The rebuilding is said to be in troublous times; and it is intimated, that it was at some good distance. It is evident, that it is not the direct scope of the prediction, but brought in as it were by the by, that from the edict authorising it, and from the rebuilding itself, we may reckon so many weeks of years to events that are spoken of as

of far superior importance. If, together with all this, we join the repetition of the sorrowful prediction about the desolation of the city and sanctuary of the Jews, it is abundantly evident, that the singular characters of joy in view, cannot be found in any thing here relating to the temporal prosperity of that people: we must therefore seek for these characters in what is said more directly of the Messiah. But here, besides the time of His coming, and His confirming the covenant with many, for a very short space, we scarce find any thing but His death, and that too a violent death, together with what may be called the death of the Jewish worship or oblations, caused by that same Messiah; which things, upon any other supposition than the Christian interpretation, were fitter to overwhelm a Jewish prophet with new sorrow, than to relieve and encourage him: whereas by the Christian interpretation, laying the stress of the characters of singular comfort and importance on the Messiah's death, in relation to the blessed end and effects of it, ver. 24, nothing could be more suitable than the chief subject of this prediction to the scope and circumstances of it, and to the angel's solemn introduction, Mal. iii. 2; Hag. ii.

It is useful to observe, that even though the parts of this prophecy which relate to the number of weeks could not be clearly explained, the other parts contain such characters, both doctrinal and historical, of the Messiah himself, and of the times of the Messiah, as make a strong proof, both of the inspiration of the prophecy, and of the Christian interpretation of it: but when, besides all this, the seeming obscurity about the number of weeks is removed, the evidence of the prediction comes very near to that of plain history.

III. In the 5th of Micah, which the gospel applies as

a prediction concerning the place of the Messiah's birth, there are the following characters of that extraordinary person. First, the above-mentioned mysterious character of a divine person incarnate; *divinity* being implied in the attribute of eternity mentioned, ver. 2, where the obscurity of the words *going forth* cannot hinder the evidence of the two expressions, *from of old, from everlasting;* which, thus joined together, strengthen the assertion of eternal pre-existence; and *subordination,* which, when joined with divinity, must relate to an assumed nature or office, being implied in the words, ver. 4, about his feeding "in the strength of the Lord, and in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God," etc.; as *incarnation* is not only connected with that subordination, according to what was proved chap. ii, but also intimated in the expressions about this great person's coming out of Bethlehem. Characters of the Messiah's *kingly office,* and *incomparable dignity,* and characters of the *prophetic style* about his benefits, are included in the titles ascribed by way of eminence to the person here described, "The judge of Israel, He that is to be ruler in Israel;" and in the expressions, ver. 4, about the glory and efficacy of his administration, "He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, and in the Majesty of the name of the Lord his God." No less singular characters of the *times of the Messiah,* or of the enlightening of the Gentiles, are included in the words immediately following, "For now shall he be great to the ends of the earth:" implying, that in the times in view the ends of the earth should know the majesty of the Lord mentioned in the preceding expressions. Besides that *transcendent dignity* is included in the words, ver. 2, about the singular honour redounding to Bethlehem above the thousands of Judah, from this great person's coming out of it. It

makes this complex description still more special and circumstantial, that with all those characters of dignity, glory, and exaltation, characters of humiliation are mixed in very remarkable expressions, ver. 1, intimating, that no circumstance of this person's sufferings, not even his being "smitten on the cheek," could be too inconsiderable to be matter of inspired prediction. What is said about his coming out of Bethlehem has a remarkable conformity with the predictions about the Messiah descending from the house of David; and also supposes, as to the time of the event in view, that it would happen during the subsistence, not only of Bethlehem, but of the *thousands of Judah;* in comparison of which, Bethlehem is mentioned as a little and despicable place, though singularly honoured above them all by this ruler's coming out of it. So that this short prediction contains, in a few words, a considerable number of the distinguishing characters of the Messiah, relating to his person, office, benefits, incomparable dignity; his humiliation, his work in enlightening the ends of the earth, and in being the great shepherd of God's flock; and the time of his coming, as well as the place of his birth. When we compare the prediction with the gospel-history, to which all the above characters prove that it agrees truly and peculiarly, besides the Jews declaring to Herod, that they understood this prediction of their Messiah, it is remarkable, that the decree of the Roman Emperor, which brought Joseph and Mary from their ordinary residence to Bethlehem at the time of Christ's birth, had been given out some time before: so that it may be reckoned one end of providence, not excluding other ends, in retarding the execution of that decree in these parts so long, that it might be a means of accomplishing this prophecy.

IV. In proving the gospel-interpretation of Isa. vii. 14, it is needful to observe, that it can be shewn from the context, that ver. 15 is not meant of Immanuel, but of Shearjashub, Isaiah's own child; whom the prophet may reasonably be supposed to point to, in saying these words, "For (*or* Yea) before the child (*or* this child) shall know—" (for so these particles may be, and by some are rendered): because God having commanded the prophet to take that child along with him, ver. 3, that divine command cannot be in vain; which it would be, unless ver. 15 be meant of that child, there being nothing else in the chapter applicable to him: And it is one of the most reasonable rules of interpretation, that when a text, considered by itself, is capable of two meanings, if one of them is inconsistent with the context, or infers an absurdity in the context, which the other does not, the meaning which infers such absurdity or inconsistency is to be rejected, and the other to be preferred. This removes one chief difficulty against the gospel-interpretation of this text.—Another difficulty is, that the birth of the Messiah being an event at a distance, could not be a fit sign of what the prophet is speaking of to Ahaz. But this difficulty is at least as strong against the Jewish meaning of the text. A young woman's conceiving and bearing a son, in the ordinary way, and calling him by what name she pleases, or is advised to, cannot be a sign of any thing that would be otherwise doubtful, if the word *sign* signify a proof. It is certain, that besides the signs which are intended as proofs, (as the signs given to Gideon, and to Zechariah, the Baptist's father), the prophets sometimes gave signs, which, without containing proofs, were intended to excite attention, and to fortify the present impression of things foretold; of which kind are the signs mentioned

Isa. xx. The birth, and the name of Immanuel, by the Jewish interpretation, cannot be a sign merely of this kind; because it was a thing still future, as well as the event to which it is supposed to excite attention, as it could not be a probative sign, having nothing in it that is any way singular. By the Christian interpretation, applying the prediction to the Messiah, it was a very real and singular sign, or proof, of God's special care of that people, and of the continuance of their civil polity, till Shiloh should come, and a sign fit to relieve and encourage God's people among them, amidst the fears mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. To shew that, in the style of the Old Testament, a future event is sometimes called a *sign*, in a different meaning from what is most commonly apprehended, see Exod. iii. 12.

Others have proved at length, that the word in the text rendered *virgin*, is justly so rendered; as indeed it annihilates the sign or wonder to give that word another meaning. The character of Immanuel, born of a virgin, has a singular conformity with the mysterious characters given of the Messiah in other prophecies, as a divine person incarnate, who was not only to assume human nature, but to assume it in its lowest and most imperfect state; which is implied in the predictions relating to His extraction, and more directly asserted in the next chapter but one to this 7th of Isaiah, Isa. ix. 6. And though the miraculous character of being born of a virgin, does not of itself infer the far more mysterious character of a divine person incarnate, yet the latter of these characters necessarily includes the former. Besides that this character of miraculous conception has a singular conformity to the words of the first promise about the seed of the woman; a title not applicable to any that come to the world in the ordinary way, neither ac-

cording to the style of scripture, or common language, or any propriety of words. To which we may add, that when it is foretold in Jer. xxxi, which treats of the times of the Messiah, and of the new covenant in the last days, that "a woman should compass a man;" and when attention is solemnly demanded to this, as the creating of a new thing on the earth; by the common rule of interpretation, that parallel places, some of which speak more obscurely, and others more clearly, of the same subject, should be improved for explaining and confirming one another, these two passages in Genesis and Jeremiah confirm the gospel-interpretation of this prediction in Isaiah.

After this 7th of Isaiah has mentioned a child that was to be born of a virgin, to be called *Immanuel*, and to be a singular sign of God's favour to his people, the very next chapter, ver. 8, speaks of the same child by the same name, as one from whom the land of Israel should receive the denomination of *Immanuel's land*, plainly denoting some singular importance in the prediction concerning Him, and implying, in the most literal sense, that He should be, in a peculiar manner, the proprietor of that land. In the 9th chapter, ver. 6, there is another passage, the clearest of all, concerning an extraordinary child, to whom such singular characters are ascribed, as imply, that He should be Immanuel in the strictest and highest sense of the word, and should be born in a miraculous way, and should also be the true proprietor of the land of Israel. Such passages, in three contiguous chapters, all relating to an extraordinary child, and evidently parallel, shew, that if the first of these passages is of itself somewhat obscure, the rest contain a key to it, especially when compared with the other prophecies just now mentioned. All which is

farther confirmed by this plain remark, that if we should receive the Jewish interpretation, (I mean that of the modern Jews), this prediction, so far as we read in scripture, was never fulfilled.

Whereas the obscurity that appears in this prediction, does not lie so much in the words of the prediction itself, as in its relation or connection with the context, and the most obvious scope of it; besides that this difficulty is proved to be stronger against any other interpretation than that given in the gospel, it should be observed, that it is suitable to the most just rules of connection, to take occasion, from present objects of less importance, to speak of more important objects that are distant and future, if these present objects have any particular resemblance or analogy to them: and if the characters of the Messiah be of that importance, as to prove, that, in effect, it could never be out of season to put God's people in mind of Him; much less could it be out of season to speak of His birth and childhood, when mention is made of other children as prophetic signs of divine favour, protection, and deliverance, as in the passage in view. But of the seeming obscurity of prophetic connection, it is intended to speak more afterwards; meantime, what is said shews, that by all the most uncontested rules of interpretation, whether we consider the most natural meaning of the words, or scope of the foregoing and following context, or parallel places, that speak either of one to whom the name of *Immanuel* may be most strictly applicable, or of a conception and birth that must be supposed to be extraordinary and supernatural, the gospel-meaning must be the true meaning, and the only reasonable meaning that can be put on this remarkable text.

V. The prophecies concerning the family of which the

Messiah was to descend, some of the chief of which have been considered formerly, grow gradually more clear and particular, as the time of His coming approaches: He who is at first only called *the seed of the woman*, being afterwards foretold as the seed of the patriarchs, every one of whom had more sons than one; and the prediction being restricted by Jacob to the tribe of Judah, is at last restricted to the house of Jesse, and the family of David, while there is never the least hint of his descending of any of the subsequent kings of Israel or Judah. And as this His descent from David is sometimes more directly asserted, and sometimes insinuated, in passages where He is said to sit on the throne of David, and especially in several passages, where He is called by the name of *David*, Isa. lv. 3; Ezek. xxxiv; Hos. iii. 5; so those more direct assertions serve to explain those intimations or insinuations. To all which, it is proper to add what was observed formerly on Isa. xi. 1, and liii. 2, as intimating, that he would descend of that family when in a low condition, and reduced, as it were, to its primitive obscurity.

VI. The prophecies which contain any particulars of the Messiah's life and actions having mostly been mentioned formerly, and the Christian interpretation of them supported with sufficient proofs, it is sufficient here to observe, that these prophecies describe him by the spotless innocence of his life, his low station, his public employment or ministry, the places where he was in a special manner to exercise it, his steadiness and diligence in it, the precise time of the beginning and end of it, and also that they foretell his miracles. As the spotless innocence and holiness of his life is necessarily included in the prophetic doctrine of his person, and of the singular measures of the divine Spirit that he was to be en-

dued with; so it is more particularly asserted in the passages which appropriate to him the titles of, *The Most Holy, The Righteous Servant of God, His Elect in whom his soul delights;* and which affirm, that he would do no violence, neither should guile be found in his mouth, Dan. ix, Isa. liii. 9, xliii. 1. His low station is implied in the passages which tell us, that he should be a servant of rulers, Isa. xlix. 7; that he should grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, etc., Isa. liii. 2. His public employment, or ministry, is described in the passages which treat more directly of his prophetic office, and which speak of him as a light to the people, who should open the eyes of the blind, bringing them by a way they knew not; and as the messenger of the covenant, who should confirm the covenant with many, Isa. xlii. xlix, Mal. iii. 1, Dan. ix. 27. These, and other passages, not only show, that he was to be employed in public teaching, but give some account of the chief subject matter of it; shewing, that it was to be, not a mere speculative knowledge of God, but the knowledge by which many should be justified; glad tidings concerning God's righteousness, covenant and salvation, which they who would hearken to in sincerity, should find their account in for ever, God making with them an everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David, Isa. liii, xlii, lvi. 1, lv. 3. As to the place where his public ministry should be exercised, besides more general prophecies, shewing that Judea was to be the place of his birth and residence, and that he would spend his labours among the Jews, Isa. xlix. 4, his teaching in the temple is implied in the predictions about his coming to it, Mal. iii. 1. And the evangelist's application of Isa. ix. 1, 2, about the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, Matt. iv. 15 is confirmed by the expressions in that text itself, of the singular

greatness of the shining light that it mentions, and by the remarkable prediction about the Messiah's highest characters within a few verses in the following context. It was proved before, from the 9th of Daniel, that the Messiah's public appearance, and his confirming the covenant with many, which implies his instructing multitudes, should begin after the sixty-ninth week, and in the seventieth week from the edict there mentioned, and that it should end in three years and a half. As to the manner and success of his ministry, it is foretold, that though it should be public, it should be without ostentation, in a quiet and peaceable manner, with indefatigable diligence, labouring and spending his strength; with unshaken steadiness, notwithstanding opposition, so that he would not fail nor be discouraged, Isa. xlii. 2, 3, 4, xlix. 4; with singular condescension and tenderness particularly towards afflicted penitents, feeding his flock like a shepherd, gathering the lambs with his arms, carrying them in his bosom, leading gently them that are with young, preaching good tidings to the meek, binding up the broken-hearted, etc., comforting them that mourn in Zion, not breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax. And though the unsuccessfulness of his doctrine, as to the great part of the Jews, is implied in various predictions, considered in part already, and more fully afterwards; yet the success of it as to a goodly number, is implied in the predictions, which show the success of his forerunner preparing the way before him, and tell that he himself would reserve the preserved of Israel, and confirm the covenant with *many*, which expressions, when understood in the most literal sense, imply, that he would not be without disciples, even *many disciples*, Isa. xl. lx. lxi. lxii. lxix. Dan. ix.

VII. Whereas the prediction in Isa. xxxv. 4, 5, is applied in the gospel to the Messiah's miracles, there are various good arguments for that application in the text and context. The context contains several singular characters of the time of the Messiah's coming; as, the time of the coming of God to the world in a singular manner; the time of the righteous vengeance against his incorrigible adversaries; the time of singular joy and consolation to his people; the time of singular light and joy in the wilderness, or Gentile world, when they would rejoice abundantly in beholding the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God; and the time when the waters and streams of spiritual blessings should abound in the wilderness. As the words of the prediction in view signify, in the most literal meaning, the healing of the various bodily diseases mentioned; it is an acknowledged rule of interpretation, that the literal meaning ought not to be departed from without necessity; which rule cannot be refused with any good grace, in this case, by those who pretend to adhere to it so tenaciously in all other cases: and though it is not expressly affirmed, that the cures foretold should be wrought in a miraculous way; yet it is evidently implied; seeing the performing such things in a natural way, which would only imply an improvement of the useful art of medicine, would be quite foreign to the scope and subject of the context, as having no connection with the spiritual blessings there mentioned; such as the coming of the Lord, and the publishing of a doctrine that would enlighten and sanctify the nations of the Gentiles, making them see the glory and excellency of the Lord, and making them walk in the way of the redeemed of the Lord, even in the way of holiness, Isa. xxxv. 2, 8, 9.

It may perhaps be objected, that the expressions

which in their literal meaning signify bodily cures, must be taken in a figurative meaning; because, after mentioning the singing of the dumb, and the leaping of the lame, it is added, as the reason of this, "For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert:" so that the prophet seems only to speak of uncommon degrees of joy, arising from the blessings to be bestowed in the desert. But, in answer to this, 1. Though the singing and leaping mentioned in the prediction, taken separately, might be capable of such a meaning as to denote only uncommon joy: this cannot be said of the other expressions in the prophet's list of diseases and cures, as the opening of the eyes of the blind, and the unstopping the ears of the deaf. 2. It does not give an ambiguous, but only a comprehensive meaning to this complex prediction, to suppose that it includes both miraculous cures, and uncommon gladness, both on account of these bodily cures themselves, and of the superior spiritual blessings to which they were subservient; particularly of the glad tidings contained in the doctrine which they confirmed, and the happy success of it. God's watering the desert, or his publishing and confirming a doctrine which, after its first spreading from Judea, was to water the desert, through the blessing of the divine Spirit, may justly be considered, both as the reason why such miracles should be wrought, and why those on whom they should be wrought should feel such uncommon complicated joy. 3. If the causal particle *for* in ver. 6. did interfere, as it does not, with the literal meaning of the prediction; considering the different import of such particles in the Hebrew, it would be a laying too much stress on our translation of that particle, to make it carry it against so many arguments for the literal meaning. 4. It makes the consistency of the causal

particle as we translate it, with the literal sense of the prediction, and the connection of the whole context more evident, if we observe, that the expressions, ver. 6. about the waters and streams in the desert, imply the pouring down of the divine Spirit, as was proved before, and that both the miraculous bodily cures mentioned, ver. 5 and 6, and the spiritual blessings to which these cures were subservient, mentioned in the context, were the effects of the same divine Spirit, and were parts of one complex design.

If it be objected, that the context speaking of the time of the enlightening of the Gentiles, which happened after the Messiah's death, and not before, this must be an argument for applying this prediction, not to the miracles of Christ, but of his apostles; it is sufficient to answer, that either way a considerable point is gained in favour of the gospel; that the great work of enlightening the Gentile nations, was in effect begun, and the foundation of it laid, when the doctrine that was to produce that enlightening was published by the Messiah Himself; that His own miracles, as well as those of his apostles, (performed in His name), were really subservient to that work; and that the prediction of miracles coming immediately after the prediction of the coming of God, the prophet saying expressly, that "then shall the eyes of the blind be opened," &c.; these things put together shew, that the most literal meaning of the prediction takes in the miracles of the Messiah himself, without excluding those performed by his apostles.

VIII. In order to see that the history of the Messiah, as contained in the prophecies, is in a great measure a history of sufferings; and that the number of predictions on that subject, as well as of facts and circumstances contained in these predictions, is far from being incon-

siderable; it is of use to observe, that such predictions are mixed with most of the principal characters formerly mentioned; and particularly with characters relating to the Messiah's various offices, the time of His coming, the place and manner of His birth, the greatness of His exaltation, and, which is most remarkable of all, with the highest characters of His personal glory.

As to His offices, and particularly His prophetic office, it was proved before, that in Isa. xlix, which speaks of Him as a prophet who was to enlighten the Gentiles, it is foretold, that He would spend His strength without success among the Jews; and that he would be abhorred, not only by some particular persons of that nation, but by the nation itself; which expressions, in their most natural meaning, imply such powerful, extensive, and violent opposition, as has an evident connection with persecution. And indeed when we compare what it behoved the Messiah to profess Himself to be, with the native consequences of obstinate misbelief of that profession among the prevailing party of the Jews, it may satisfy us, that the predictions concerning the unbelief of the Jews, to be treated of more fully afterwards, contain predictions of the sufferings of the Messiah, seeing they imply, that they would treat Him as an impostor. And accordingly we see that the unbelief of the Jews and the sufferings of the Messiah, are connected together in the 53d of Isaiah, comparing the beginning of that chapter with the sequel.

As to passages which treat more directly of the Messiah's priestly office, it was proved above, that the passages relating to that subject are more numerous than many apprehend. And Isa. liii, which speaks expressly both of the Messiah's sacrifice and intercession, gives so particular a description of His sufferings, as to the chief

parts, causes, and effects of them, as has justly been matter of admiration to impartial readers in all ages, as well as a chief means of converting some particular Jews from time to time; and is, on good grounds, commonly said to look more like history than prophecy; though its genuineness, as being delivered long before the days of Christ, is beyond all controversy, and has never been called in question by the Jews themselves.

In speaking of the Messiah as a king or prince, it is foretold in Daniel ix. that Messiah the prince should be cut off; which word naturally signifies a violent death: and in Zechariah ix. after mention is made of an extraordinary king in Zion, having salvation in an eminent or singular manner, of singularly extensive dominion, who would speak peace to the heathen; the prophet, in the verse immediately following, speaks of the blood of the covenant, as that which brings prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water; which was proved formerly to be applicable only to the blood of Messiah.

The 22d psalm, which speaks so plainly of the times of the Messiah, or of the enlightening of the Gentiles, and which will be more fully proved afterwards to treat of the person of the Messiah, describes all along an eminent sufferer, actually in the hands of His enemies: which was never the case of David; who, though oft assaulted and pursued by enemies, was never apprehended by them, or actually in their power: and as the whole tenor of the description represents that sufferer as surrounded by a multitude of cruel enemies, maliciously insulting over Him in His distress, while suffering public execution, and brought at last to the dust of death; so it is very remarkable, that the manner of His death is expressed by piercing His hands and feet; words plainly describing crucifixion, which was a thing

not known among the Jews in the times of David, nor for many ages after.

It was proved before, that Micah v, which foretells the place of the Messiah's birth, hints at the indignities He was to suffer; shewing that He to whom the title of the *Judge of Israel* is applied in a peculiar manner, should be smitten on the cheek: which prediction has a remarkable conformity with Isa. l. 6, where the same kind of indignities are mentioned in much the same expressions. And this is the more observable, because in the book of Micah whole sentences are borrowed from Isaiah, as appears by comparing the beginning of Isa. ii. and Micah iv; and the descriptions of sufferings in Micah v, and Isa. l, have a manifest conformity to Isa. lii. 14. As it was proved before, that the first promise of the Messiah in Gen. iii. foretells his miraculous conception, so it contains a remarkable hint at His sufferings; his heel's being bruised by the serpent, intimating that He would suffer from enemies, in that same inferior part of the constitution of His person, or inferior nature, by the sufferings of which He was to crush his great adversary.

The last-cited passage in Isa. lii. shews, that predictions of the Messiah's sufferings are sometimes mixed with predictions of His exaltation, seeing the same person who is there said to be exalted and extolled, and to be very high, sprinkling many nations, and listened to with reverence by the kings of many nations, is said to have His visage "so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men, as that many should be astonished at him."

Predictions of the Messiah's sufferings are mixed with the highest characters of His personal glory as a divine person incarnate, in no less than three contiguous chap-

ters in Zechariah, viz., chap. xi. 13, xii. 10, xiii. 7. In the first of which, after mentioning the price of the treachery there foretold, he is called "the Lord," who says, "A goodly price that I was prised at of them:" and in the very next chapter he is called "the Lord," who is represented as "pierced," and that by the inhabitants of Jerusalem; whose being pierced would be the occasion of singular mourning, largely described in the context; in order to which mourning the Spirit of grace and supplication behoved to be poured down: and which makes the prediction still more remarkable, that Spirit of grace is said to be "poured down by Him who should be pierced." In Zech. xiii, after mention of the fountain opened for taking away sin, and of the abolishing of idolatry, an eminent sufferer is spoken of by God Himself as His shepherd, which is one of the distinguishing titles of the Messiah in the prophetic style. To which a far more wonderful denomination is presently added, "the man that is my fellow;" concerning which title, however mysterious, it is very evident, that it is not applicable to any mere creature, nor explicable but by the doctrine of incarnation: and as it is foretold of this mysterious person, that God's sword should awake against Him, and smite Him; which implies, that He would undergo very singular sufferings, inflicted more immediately by divine power, exerted in an extraordinary way for that end; so it is evident, that this branch of the prediction is parallel to what we have in Isa. liii. 10, "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He hath put Him to grief: thou shalt make His soul a sacrifice for sin."

To shew, that not only the predictions of the Messiah's sufferings, but also the facts contained in these predictions, are of a considerable number; if we take a short

view of them according to the order of time in which they happened, it will appear, not only that the prophecies represent the Messiah as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, with indignities and opposition in His life; but also that they contain a particular and circumstantial description of His death.

It is not only foretold, as has been proved, that He was to be betrayed by a covetous person, voluntarily offering himself for that base purpose for some pieces of silver; but besides, a hint at the traitor's subsequent remorse, the precise number of pieces of silver which were the price of his treachery, the place where he would cast them down, and the use to which in the event they should be applied, are particularly specified, Zech. xi. 13, "I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter *in the house of the Lord*."—Matt. xxvii. 5, "And he cast down the pieces of silver *in the temple;*—and they bought with them the potter's field." It is not only foretold that the Messiah would suffer a violent death; but whereas that might happen by secret or tumultuary assassination, it is foretold, that He would suffer under the colour of public justice, as one taken from prison and judgment. A particular description is given of His maltreatment before his death: that "His visage should be so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men, that many would be astonished at Him," Isa. lii. 14; "that this judge of Israel should be smitten with a rod on the cheek," Micah v. 1; "that he would give His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them who plucked off the hair; and would not hide His face from shame and spitting," Isa. l. 6; shewing that He would meet with extraordinary marks of rage, from which persons tried for their life are usually secured by the common bowels of humanity: and in Isa. liii, men-

tion is made, not only of His death, but of a variety of other sufferings previous to it, under the names of wounds, bruises, and stripes. As to the manner of His death, when Psa. xxii, as was observed a little above, foretells that He would be pierced in hands and feet, it is observable, that crucifixion can scarcely be described in plainer terms. That same psalm gives a very particular description of His maltreatment at the time of His death, shewing, that He who should be pierced hands and feet, should also be compassed about by cruel enemies, ver. 16; that the assembly of the wicked should enclose Him; which assembly is represented gazing at Him as a public spectacle, insulting Him, giving Him vinegar to drink, and upbraiding Him with his professed confidence in God: and the expressions, ver. 18, about parting His garments, would be less remarkable, if it were not added, that they would cast lots upon His vesture; the minuteness of which circumstances in themselves, makes the evidence of foreknowledge in the prediction the more striking, and its conformity with the history the more special and circumstantial. That the inhabitants of Jerusalem would be the more immediate instruments of the Messiah's sufferings, is implied in the above-cited prediction in Zech. xii. 10, which speaks of the inhabitants of that city as looking to Him whom they had pierced, for though the name of Jerusalem is sometimes taken in another, and more large sense, for the Church of God; this is chiefly (if not always) in speaking of the privileges, and not of the crimes of Jerusalem: and though it should be supposed that that name denotes all the Messiah's people, for whose sins He was to be pierced; yet seeing there are so many other names by which the Messiah's people might be denominated, it is at least a very probable reason for giving them the name

of *the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, that the people to whom that name literally and originally belonged, would be the more immediate instruments of the sufferings in view. That besides the Messiah's sufferings from the hands of men, He would suffer more immediately from the hand of God himself; and that all His sufferings would be by virtue of a divine sentence transferring our guilt upon Him, and that by His own free and cordial consent, is partly evident from the passages cited a little above from Isa liii. 10, and Zech. xiii. 7, where it is said, that "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and that His sword should awake against Him;" and partly from Isa liii. 6, and 12, where it is said, "that the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all;" and "His pouring out His soul unto death," is mentioned as a voluntary act, for which He should be highly honoured and rewarded. His behaviour under His sufferings, as made up of resignation to God, together with meekness and forgiveness towards men, is plainly enough described in Isa. liii. 7, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth," &c.: and the 9th and 12th verses of the same chapter shew, that though He should be numbered with transgressors, or joined with malefactors, in His death, He should be separated from them in His burying; and that His interment should be in the grave of a rich and honourable person.

IX. As to the Messiah's exaltation, and particularly his resurrection, though it were not expressly foretold in the prophecies, yet once supposing his death, which is foretold so frequently, his rising from the dead, and that not only to live for a time, which was the case as to some others, but to live for ever, is necessarily connected with the other prophetic characters of the singular glory and continuance of his person and offices. But

it is of importance to shew, that this great event is not only connected with the other characters of the Messiah but particularly foretold in various predictions concerning him. The 16th Psalm speaks of an eminent person who is supposed to be for some time in *hades*, or the state of the dead: but seeing it is foretold, that he should not continue in that state so long time as naturally brings dead bodies to corruption or putrefaction, this implies, not only that he should rise again, but that he should rise within a very few days after his death; and the sequel of the prediction shews, that God would show him the path of life, even of life eternal, bringing him to fulness of joy, at the right hand of God, and to eternal pleasures, in the place of the special residence of God: which, according to the prophets, is the highest heaven. To show how good ground there is for applying this prediction to the Messiah, it must be observed, that as it is not at all applicable to David himself, so when David is foretelling extraordinary things, not of himself, but of an eminent person whom he represents, and to whom he ascribes characters of singular dignity, blessedness, and holiness, it is always the Messiah that is meant, as will appear more clearly afterwards. And seeing the only title by which the eminent person here mentioned is distinguished, is *the Holy One of God*, this must imply, that the title should belong to him in a singular manner and degree; which evidently makes it one of the singular characters of the Messiah. And besides all this, as resurrection to eternal life and glory, in a short space of time after death, is necessarily connected with the other primary characters of the Messiah; so going to the right hand of God, which is mentioned in this prediction, is appropriated to the Messiah in Psa. cx. 1; of which afterwards.

The things mentioned in the three last verses of Isa. liii, as happening to the Messiah, are represented as happening after his death; and plainly suppose his living after death; for it is after his being cut off out of the land of the living, and after making his soul a sacrifice for sin, that it is said he should see his seed, and prolong his days, and that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand; and it is after his pouring out his soul unto death and upon account of his doing so, that it is said, ver. 12, that God would divide him a portion with the great, etc., so that whereas others are said to be rewarded for the good actions done in their life, the Messiah is represented as rewarded on account of his death. The 21st Psalm speaks of a king of incomparable honour, majesty, glory and blessedness; of whom it is said, that he should receive life and length of days for ever and ever. Which words, about length of days, as well as the prolonging of days, mentioned Is. liii. import something different from the common privilege of the future existence of souls in a separate state, or the resurrection at the end of the world; and must imply, that if the person spoken of was to die, he was to rise again soon, and to prolong his life eternally; the expressions, "for ever and ever," strongly asserting perpetual duration, in the highest and strictest sense. And the same arguments which were applied to Psa. xvi. to shew, that it is meant of the Messiah, are evidently applicable also to this psalm.

Once supposing the Messiah's death, his resurrection is necessarily implied in the predictions, which speak of the perpetual continuance of his mediatorial administration as to his various offices: as when it is said that his throne is for and ever, Psa. xlv, that abundance of peace shall be maintained by him so long as the moon endureth, Psa. lxxii. 7, (see also ver. 5, 15, 17 and Dan. vii;) that he

should be a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. And as to his prophetic office, it is after saying that he should be pierced hands and feet, and brought to the dust of death, that he is represented in Psa. xxii. 25 as instructing the great congregation; after which it is added, ver. 27, that all the ends of the world shall turn to the Lord, and worship him. All the prophecies which show that the Messiah was to act in a low station, and in a state of great humiliation, during his life, prove that the general prophecies concerning his exaltation must relate to his state after death, and so must suppose his resurrection; as particularly Isa. lii. where his humiliation is mentioned as astonishing, yet it is foretold, at the same time, that "he should be exalted and extolled, and be very high." And besides such more general predictions of exaltation, resurrection is necessarily supposed in the predictions of the various particular subsequent steps of the Messiah's exaltation; such as, his ascension, his sitting at the right hand of God, and his glorious appearance on earth, at the end of the world.*

As to the Messiah's ascension to heaven, it was proved before, that it is foretold in the 7th of Daniel; where the ruler of the everlasting kingdom of the saints of the Most high, is called *The Son of Man;* which supposes that his first residence should be on earth, the original habitation of every son of man; and is afterwards represented as coming in the clouds of heaven, not from heaven to earth, but from a distant place to heaven, or to the throne of the Ancient of Days; and when it is said, that *they brought him* near before him, it is a remarkable hint at his glorious attendance when he ascended.

In Psa. lxviii, which contains remarkable predictions

* See the prophecies concerning the resurrection of the dead in general formerly explained, particularly, Isa. xxvi.

of the enlightening of the Gentiles, he who is said, ver. 18, to ascend on high, is described by various distinguishing characters of the Messiah. Characters of divinity and of subordination are mixed together, when he is called *the Lord*, and at the same time is represented as receiving gifts for men; as the Messiah's peculiar influence on the salvation and happiness of sinners is implied in the expressions of "receiving gifts for men, even the rebellious, that God might dwell among them;" which proves, that it is Immanuel that is spoken of; and the characters of the prophetic style about the Messiah, appear in the expressions concerning leading captivity captive.

Both the Messiah's resurrection and ascension are supposed in the prophecies which speak of him as at the right hand of God; whither it was proved already that Psa. xvi. foretells he should go, after coming out of *hades;* and where Psa. cx. represents him as sitting till his enemies be made his footstool, and administering as a priest for ever. And as a chief thing included in sitting at God's right hand, is incomparable power and authority, this is ascribed to the Messiah in the above-cited predictions, that speak in the most magnificent manner of his kingly office, as particularly Dan. vii. 14. His glorious appearance on earth, at the end of the world is foretold in wonderful expressions in the forecited 19th of Job; where Job speaks triumphantly of the sight he should have, even with the bodily eye, of his God and Redeemer, standing on the earth in the latter day, as a most blessed and glorious sight; the distant hope of which inspired him with transports of joy amidst the most overwhelming distresses, and supported him under the melancholy view of all that the worms should do to his body after death.

Sect. II. *Of the Messiah's Church.*

To show what abundant evidence arises from the predictions concerning the enlightening of the Gentiles, these predictions may be usefully divided into various classes, according to the various ways in which they are expressed; sometimes in promises directed to the Messiah, to Zion, or to the Gentiles; sometimes in threatenings against the unbelieving Jews, against the abettors of Heathen idolatry, or against the Heathen idols themselves. Thus it is promised to the Messiah, that whereas it would be a light thing only to restore the preserved of Israel, or of the Jews, among whom his labour would be spent, in a great measure, without success, God would give him for a light to the Gentiles, and his salvation to the ends of the earth; that the nations of the Gentiles, and their kings, should hearken to him with reverence, Isa. xlix, should be called by him, and run to him, and be gathered to him at his call; that they should seek to him, and honour him; that God would give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for his possession, Isa. lv. lii. Psa. ii. and that the efficacy of his mediatory offices was to extend to all nations, seeing they should all be enlightened, sprinkled, governed, and saved by him.

It is promised to Zion, Isa. ii. xlix. liv. lx, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and that all nations should flow into it; that the word or law of God that was to enlighten the nations, should go out of Zion; that after Zion had lost many of her former children, multitudes of new children should crowd and throng into her, so that she behoved to enlarge the place of her tent, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitations; that she would

even be astonished at the abundance of the Gentiles that should be converted to her; and that the house of God should be a house of prayer for all people.

It is promised to the Gentiles themselves, Isa. xxv. Mal. i, that God would destroy the face of the covering, and the vail that was spread over all nations, and make a feast to them all in his holy mountain; that from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, God's name should be great among the Gentiles, etc; that his name should be great to the ends of the earth; that all the ends of the earth should see the glory and the salvation of God, and return to him and worship him, Psa. xxii, lxxxvi. 9; and that the knowledge of the Lord should fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

In predictions which contain threatenings against the obstinate, unbelieving Jews, Deut. xxxii. 21, Isa. lxv. 1, 2, it is foretold, that as they moved God to jealousy with that which is not God, so he would move them to jealousy with those that were not a people; and that whereas God had spread out his hands all day to a rebellious people, he would be sought of them that asked not for him, and found of them that sought him not. See also Isa. xliii. 21, 22. It is threatened against the obstinate abettors of heathen idolatry, that they should be put to confusion, Psa. xcvii. 7; and against the heathen idols themselves, that God would famish all the gods of the earth; and that men would worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen, Zeph. ii. 11; and that God would cut off the names of the idols out of the land, that they might no more be remembered, Zech. xiii. 2.

Whereas they who misinterpret the prophecies about the enlightening of the Gentiles, pretend, that they are only meant of such conversions of particular proselytes

as happened before the days of Christ, it is evident, from the passages now cited, and from many others, that however such particular conversions might be preparatory and subservient to that far more general, national, and extensive conversion of the Gentiles, which was the effect of the gospel, it is only to that more general conversion that the predictions in view are truly applicable, for if some passages speak only in a more general way of the enlightening of the Gentiles, yet a great many predictions are so expressed, as plainly to foretell the conversion, not merely of particular proselytes, but of nations; yea, of many nations, of the most barbarous nations, of nations most remote from Judea, and even several particular nations; and, among the rest, those who had formerly been the most inveterate enemies to the Jews, and to their religion, are expressly mentioned as embracing and submitting to it.

The conversion of *nations,* even of *many nations,* is plainly foretold, when it is said, that *nations* that know not the Messiah, should be called by him, and run unto him, Isa. lv; that *many nations* should be sprinkled by him, Isa. lii; that *many nations* should be joined to the Lord, and should be his people, Zech. ii. 11; and that *many people,* or nations, should say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord," etc. Isa. xi. 3.

The prophecies which speak of the conversion of *all nations,* and of the filling of all the ends of the earth, from the rising to the setting of the sun, with the knowledge of the Lord, may justly be considered as complex predictions; a part of which is already fulfilled by the conversion of many nations: and the evidence arising from this, as was proved before, cannot be justly excepted against on account of what is yet unfulfilled; especially considering that the prophets do not affirm,

that all nations would be converted at once, but plainly shew the contrary.

That it is not merely the conversion of particular persons, but of nations, that is foretold, will be further evident, to whosoever duly considers the predictions contained in the above-mentioned threatenings; particularly the threatenings against the heathen idolatry, plainly foretelling the total abolition of it in many nations; of which more fully afterwards.

II. As the conversion of nations the most remote from Judea, and of several of the most barbarous nations, is foretold in the predictions about God's enlightening the uttermost ends of the earth, and about his making the owls of the desert, and the dragons of the wilderness, to honour him, Isa. xliii. 20, xxxv. 7; so in various remarkable predictions, the conversion of some particular countries is foretold in such a manner, as implies, that the true religion would become the national religion of these countries, as particularly of Egypt, Assyria, and Ethopia, Isa. xviii. 7, xix. from ver. 18, to the end; Psa. lxviii. 31; besides various other countries, mentioned Isa. lxvi. 19, under the ancient names of *Tarshish, Pul,* and *Lud, Tubal* and *Javan;* for the explication of which names it is sufficient here to refer to commentators.

III. That the doctrine which was to enlighten the Gentile nations should proceed from Judea, while that nation subsisted, and should be first propagated by teachers of that nation, is evident from the prophecies formerly cited, relating to the time of the Messiah's coming, and the place of his birth and residence; and is very particularly foretold in Isa. ii. 3, where it is said, that the law or word of the Lord by which the nations were to be enlightened, would go out of Zion and Jerusalem: and in Zech. viii. 23, it is said, that "ten men

shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you;" and it is said in the verse immediately preceding, that many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.

IV. As to the manner of the propagation of the Messiah's doctrine, which was to enlighten the nations, that its success should not be owing to external force, but to the efficacy of the word and Spirit of God is evident from the prophetic account of the Messiah's low circumstances on earth, of the chief things that would qualify him for his undertaking, of the voluntary manner in which the nations would submit to Him, and particularly from the several predictions which show that the time of the Messiah's coming, and of the enlightening of the Gentiles, should be in a peculiar manner the time of the pouring down of the Spirit of God from on high. It has been proved at large already, as to the Messiah's condition on earth, that it was to be a state of great humiliation and suffering; that instead of being qualified for worldly conquests as a temporal ruler, He was to be a "servant of rulers," Isa. xlix; that He should grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, Isa. liii; that instead of filling the world with the noise of His victories, "He would not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard on the streets," Isa. xlii. When the prophets speak of the things that qualified the Messiah for his undertaking, they speak indeed both of his rod and his sword: but then it is of the rod and sword of his mouth; as when it is said, Isa. xi. 4, that "He should smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and that with the breath of His lips he should slay the

wicked." And whereas Psal. xlv. speaks of his girding on his sword, Isa. xlix. 2 says that God would make His mouth like a sharp sword: which metaphors are explained when it is said that God would pour out His Spirit upon Him, Isa. xlii. 1, and that "the Spirit of the Lord would rest on Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord." That the submission of the Gentiles to the Messiah would be voluntary, is foretold by representing them as running to Him at his call; as seeking, gathering, listening to Him, and waiting on His law; as exhorting one another to return to the true God, Isa. ii. 3, Zech. viii. 21; as thronging and rushing into Zion, and flying thither as a cloud, and as doves to their windows. And the acts of divine power and mercy by which the Gentiles were to be converted, are expressed by opening the eyes of the blind, saying to the prisoners, Go forth, making sinners a willing people in the day of the Messiah's power, and destroying the veil and covering that was spread over the nations.

V. That the times of the Messiah should be times of the pouring down of the divine Spirit from on high, was proved before from the prophetic account of the distinguishing privileges of the New Testament dispensation: but whereas some prophecies on that subject are meant of the ordinary work of God's Spirit in sanctification, the perpetual continuance of which is foretold in clear and strong expressions at the end of Isa. lix. formerly cited; there is a remarkable prediction, relating to miraculous and extraordinary gifts, expressed by seeing visions, in Joel ii. 28, &c., which prediction contains various proofs of its relating to the times of the Messiah; seeing, when it is promised that God would pour down His Spirit on *all flesh*, these words, *all flesh*,

according to the best rules of interpretation, and particularly according to the prophetic style in other places, must include Jews and Gentiles; as when it is promised elsewhere that *all flesh* should see the glory of the Lord, which is necessarily supposed when it is said that *all flesh* should receive the Spirit of the Lord: and besides this, the context shews that the prophet is speaking of the time when there should be singular encouragements for men to call on the Lord, that they might be saved; and when, in a peculiar manner, there should be salvation or deliverance in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; which predictions receive farther light, by being compared with ver. 18 of chap. iii. of this same short book of prophecy, foretelling that "a fountain shall come out of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim."

As the effects of the divine Spirit mentioned by Joel are evidently extraordinary and miraculous, so he foretells that these gifts should be far more extensive, and conferred on greater numbers than formerly, and particularly that they should be conferred on persons of low education and circumstances: so that, whereas Amos speaks of it as an extraordinary thing, that he, being neither a prophet, nor a prophet's son, was honoured with prophetic inspiration; Joel shows that this should be far from being uncommon at the time he speaks of.

All these things joined together, show that the great success of the Messiah's doctrine would not be owing to external force, but that we may apply to it the remarkable expressions in Zech. iv. 6, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts;" and it is very remarkable, that besides the promises of the Spirit of God, the predictions in view abound in commendations of God's word, and of its singular

efficacy, as in Isa. xl. 8, lv. 10; and the conversion of the kings of the earth is expressly ascribed to it, Psal. cxxxviii. 4.

V. That the propagation of the Messiah's doctrine among the Gentiles may be very *speedy*, as well as very extensive, is evidently implied in the several prophetic expressions above mentioned, representing the nations as gathering and running to the Messiah; thronging and flowing into Zion; flying thither as a cloud, and as doves to their windows: so that Zion would be amazed at the sudden multiplication of her inhabitants. In Isa. lxvi. 8, the conversion of the Gentiles is compared to a nation's being born at once; and in Psal. lxviii. 31 it is said of Ethiopia, not only that she should stretch out her hands to God, but that she should do it *soon*.

VI. One of the most remarkable things foretold concerning the ordinances of worship in the Messiah's church, is the abolishing of the ceremonial law. That this is foretold in Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, will be evident, if we consider that the words in that prediction, concerning the covenant made with Israel at their coming out of Egypt, cannot relate to God's promises, but to His precepts delivered at that time; because it is said expressly, *which my covenant they brake;* which can only be said of God's precepts, not of His promises: and whereas the precepts that were delivered at that time, and the changing or abolishing of which is foretold, must be either the moral or the ceremonial precepts, it is evident that it cannot be the former, but the latter, that the prophet means; because the obligation of the moral precepts is necessarily perpetual, and instead of beginning at the deliverance from Egypt, was of as old a date as man's creation: besides that the continuance of it is implied in that great promise of the new cove-

nant in the context, viz. that God would write His law on men's heart; for moral precepts or rules could not continue to be God's law, unless they continued to be enjoined by His authority.

In Jer. iii. 15, 16, 17, which speaks of the time when not only particular persons, but nations, yea all the nations, should be gathered to the name of the Lord at Jerusalem, and walk no more after the imagination of their evil heart, it is foretold, that at that time "they shall say no more, the ark of the covenant of the Lord, neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more;" which last words may also be rendered, as they are by some, "neither shall it be magnified any more:" where the thing directly asserted, in a variety of strong expressions, is the future abolition of all the religious regard due to the ark; but this naturally infers the abolition of the whole ceremonial law, of which the regard paid to the ark was an essential and principal part; the chief branches of the ceremonial worship being greatly concerned in it.

If it be objected, that the prophet only means, that in the second temple the ark should be wanting, having been lost in the time of the Babylonish captivity; in answer to this it is proper to observe, not only that the loss of the ark, and several other things, such as the Urim and Thummim, may be justly considered as providential preparatives for the approaching period of a service that depended so much on these things; but also, that the thing expressly mentioned in the prophecy in view, is not the loss of the ark, but a total laying aside all regard to it, and all remembrance of it; whereas during the standing of the Levitical law, there behoved to be a singular regard in the most solemn service to the

place where the ark should have been in the Holy of Holies. But besides all this, whereas the ark was lost at the time of the captivity, the event the prophet speaks of is mentioned as what should happen at a considerable distance of time, not only after the captivity, but after the return from it: for whereas it is said, ver. 14, that God would bring back one of a city, and two of a family; the laying aside the regard paid formerly to the ark is mentioned, ver. 16, as what should happen after the Jews should be multiplied and increased in the land. And whereas by the ceremonial law, the ark and the mercy-seat, which was the covering of it, was considered as God's throne, as the place of His special residence among His people, Psa. lxxx. 1, where He was to meet with them, and towards which the most solemn worship behoved to be directed; the prophet shews here, at ver. 17, that at the time he speaks of, the difference between the place of the ark and mercy-seat, and other places in Jerusalem, should be at an end; and all Jerusalem, or the whole church of God, should be considered as God's throne, and as the place of His residence. That we are to understand the Jerusalem mentioned in this prediction as signifying the true Church of God, is evident; because the mere literal meaning, which would imply the gathering of all nations to one city, is absurd; and because the metaphorical meaning is so suitable to parallel places, particularly to Is. ii. 2, 3, where the flowing of all nations to Zion, is explained by, the word of the Lord going out of Zion and Jerusalem, to bring all nations to God's church.*

As Jeremiah, in the place now explained, foretells the abolishing of the ancient regard paid to the ark, and of

* See Mal. i. 11, "In every place," &c.

the difference betwixt the place of the ark, which was the principal place in the temple, and other places in Jerusalem, the whole of which would be the throne of God; so Zechariah foretells the abolishing of the distinguishing relative sanctity of all the utensils of the temple; and shews, that the difference which the ceremonial law made betwixt these utensils and the utensils of other houses in Jerusalem, would be at an end; and that even the inscription, which that law made peculiar to the high priest's mitre, *Holiness to the Lord*, would be upon the bells of the horses, Zech. xiv. 20, 21; which things both imply the abolition of the ceremonial law, and the exalting of God's church to superior measures of holiness. Though the context did not prove that this prediction relates to the times of the Messiah, the subject-matter of the prediction itself would prove it; but besides this, the context shews, that the prophet is speaking of the times when the nations that were formerly enemies to Jerusalem would embrace her religion.

In Isa. lvi, which treats of the time when God's house should be a house of prayer for all people, it is foretold, that the differences which the ceremonial law made betwixt eunuchs, or strangers, and other worshippers of the true God, should be taken away; and when persons labouring under disadvantages by that law, should, upon their taking hold of God's covenant, be on a level with others, as to spiritual privileges. And it is very observable, that seeing keeping God's sabbaths is here joined with the necessary duties of taking hold of God's covenant, and men's joining themselves to the Lord to be his servants; and is mentioned as the duty and character of those whom God would bless with spiritual privileges, when he would abolish ceremonial differences; this must infer, that the law of the sabbath was no part of that

law that was to be abolished, but would be binding on the church after the Messiah's coming, as well as before.

Whereas one of the most essential parts of the ceremonial law, was the law of priesthood, restricting that office to the house of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi; nothing can be more just than the reasoning in the epistle to the Hebrews; shewing, that seeing the prophets foretell, on the one hand, that the Messiah would descend, not of the tribe of Levi, but of Judah; and, on the other hand, that He would be a priest for ever, not of the order of Aaron, but of that of Melchizedek, the superiority of which above the other is evident from the Old Testament itself; this great change, as to the priesthood, in the times of the Messiah, must necessarily infer a change of the law, that is, of the ceremonial law, and of the ordinances of worship. And accordingly, in more prophecies than one, where the Messiah's sacrifice and death are foretold, the abolishing of ceremonial oblations is either directly asserted, or at least insinuated; as in Psa. xl, where the Messiah is represented as coming to do that for which all other sacrifice and offering was insufficient; and it is declared, that "sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire,—thou hast not required;" which could not be said of things that God was to require, and accept of, in all ages, and every state of the church. And in Dan. ix, which foretells the Messiah's being cut off, and His finishing transgression, &c., it is said, that at the time of His death, or in the midst of the seventieth week there mentioned, He would cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; which must be meant of a virtual abolishing of ceremonial oblations, and that previously to the total extinction of them, which behoved to be the effect of the destruction of the city and sanc-

tuary, to which, by the divine law, all such oblations were peremptorily restricted and confined.

In the book of Malachi, who lived nearest of all the prophets to the times of the Messiah, and part of whose prophecy is designed, in a special manner, to rebuke both the Jewish people and priests, for violations of the ceremonial law itself, by offering corrupt and polluted offerings, it is foretold, chap. i. 10, 11, that God would not accept of an offering at their hands; for the Gentiles would offer incense and a pure offering, and that in *every place;* which expressions, if compared with the clearer predictions above mentioned, seem to contain at least a hint, that the difference made by the ceremonial law betwixt places, for the most solemn divine service, should come to an end; and that at the time of the enlightening of the Gentiles, pure acts of more spiritual worship should supersede all the ancient Levitical oblations.

In Isa. lxvi, which contains very remarkable predictions of the enlightening of the Gentiles; as ver. 1, contains a solemn reproof to those who laid too much stress on the material temple at Jerusalem; so the two following verses shew, that God regards only the services of those who are of a contrite spirit; and that, at the time the prophet has in view, God would not accept, but utterly reject such services, as men's offering oxen or lambs, or burning incense: all which things were commanded in the ceremonial law, and were necessary parts of divine worship while that law subsisted. That the prohibition contained in this prediction is not to be restricted to things offered to idols, is evident from the tenor of the prediction itself, and particularly from these remarkable words in it, "He that burneth incense is as if he blessed an idol;" where it is manifest, that burning

incense in general, though on pretence of worshipping the true God, is condemned; because otherwise the proposition would be identic; as if it were said, he that worships an idol is as if he worshipped an idol; and it is an incontested rule of interpretation, that we ought not to put an absurd meaning on words that admit of a better.

As Isaiah, at the same time, reproves excessive esteem of the Jewish temple, and foretells the abolishing of the Levitical service belonging to it; so the Prophet Zephaniah speaks of a particular time when it would have singularly dangerous consequences, if men laid too much stress on the holy mountain where that temple stood; and insinuates, that the difference which the ceremonial law made betwixt that mountain and other places, should be abolished: see Zeph. iii. 11, where both the foregoing and following context contain various characters of the times of the Messiah.

Whereas the prophecies that have been mentioned, relate more directly to the dissolution of the obligation of the ceremonial law, after the Messiah's coming; there are other prophecies which shew, that the actual observance of it would be rendered impracticable, by the destruction of the city and sanctuary, to which the ceremonial service was confined. Divine contrivance appears in restricting that service to a place which God foretells would come to an end; and foretells it in the same book where that service is appointed, Deut. xxviii. xxxii; it being evident, that it could not be the intention of God's law, to found a perpetual obligation to things which, after some ages, his righteous providence would render impracticable, and which himself foretells and forewarns, that he would thus put out of men's power. At the beginning of Christianity, the perpetual obligation of the

ceremonial law was the subject of great controversy between Christ's followers and his enemies; but the destruction of the Jewish city and sanctuary gave an awful decision of it.

Thus the conclusion in view is proved by a considerable number of predictions, relating to the changing of the Sinai covenant, the removal of the ceremonial differences betwixt places, persons, and things; the change of the law of priesthood, and the final destruction of the place to which the Levitical service was fixed. Nor is it any just objection, that the names of *sacrifice* and *offering* are sometimes given to the future worship of the enlightened Gentiles; seeing these sacrifices are said to be offered *in every place,* Mal. i. 11; and seeing the same names are given to mere spiritual acts of worship, performed under the Old Testament itself; such as, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving; as also to the broken heart, and to works of righteousness in general, Psa. iv. l. li. The strong manner in which several scriptures give the preference to these spiritual sacrifices, above those of the ceremonial kind, gives considerable confirmation to the more direct proofs, that the ceremonial kind should be one day laid aside.

VII. That the first state of the Messiah church would be, in a great measure, a state of persecution, may be reasonably inferred from the predictions concerning the persecution and sufferings of the Messiah himself, which are represented as proceeding from men in power and authority putting Him to death under colour of public justice, Isa. liii; Psa. xxii: so that the prophetic characters of the Messiah's enemies, as to their power and malice, shew, that they would be able, and very willing, to persecute, though unable to extirpate, his disciples and followers. The prophetic description of the opposi-

tion that would be made to the Messiah, contains many things, which shew that it would be very powerful, and that it would not be of so short continuance as to end at the Messiah's death; which, according to the 9th of Daniel, was to fall out in a very short space after His entrance on His public ministry. That opposition is described as made, not only by the prevailing party of the Jews, among whom the Messiah himself was to suffer, but also by the heathen, by their kings and rulers, by the rulers of many countries, taking counsel together, bestirring and exerting themselves to their utmost, venting uncommon rage, continuing to act as enemies to the Messiah, after His ascending from this world to God's right hand, Psa. ii. cx; and as an opposition, in the defeating of which divine power behoved to be exerted in a singular manner, breaking these adversaries as a potter's vessel with a rod of iron, striking through kings in the day of God's wrath, and wounding the head over many countries; which things are represented as necessary, that the Messiah might have the heathen for His heritage, and the ends of the earth for His possession, and that His enemies might be made His footstool, Psa. ii. cx.

Whereas several prophecies speak in a more general way of the day of the Messiah, not only as a day of wonderful mercy to them who would submit to the true God, but also as a day of righteous wrath against his incorrigible adversaries, without characterising these adversaries so particularly as the predictions that speak of the enemies of the Messiah, viz. the abettors of Jewish unbelief and heathen idolatry, it is evident from the rules of just interpretation, that the former sort of prophecies must be explained by the latter; and the account given in both of them, of the sins and punishment of irre

claimable adversaries, shows, that they would make the Messiah's people suffer a great deal, and that their sufferings would be far from being inconsiderable, as to the degree or continuance of them.

As it is foretold in the 2d and 7th of Daniel, that the Messiah should come, and that his doctrine should be propagated under the fourth or Roman monarchy; so there is a remarkable prediction in Zech. i, shewing, that all the four monarchies, and consequently the Roman among the rest, would be scatterers or persecutors of the people of God.

In Malachi iii, after foretelling the coming of the messenger of the covenant, the object of the delight of God's people, it is added, "But who may abide the day of his coming?" And the sequel shews, that He would try and purify his true servants like gold and silver; which, considering the prophetic style about the effects of affliction, is a remarkable hint, that, at the time in view, God's true servants should be tried and purified in the furnace of persecution; a trial which every one would not be able to abide.

In Isa. lxvi. 19, the men who would declare God's glory among many nations of the Gentiles, are represented as men escaping and flying from persecution; and ver. 5 speaks of eminent servants of God cast out by their brethren, on pretence of zeal for the glory of God; which shews, that the prophet speaks of Jews who should be persecuted by other mistaken Jews. And if it be objected, that all this might be applicable to the sufferings, and to the subsequent successful doctrines, of some Jews, before the times of Christ and his disciples; it is a sufficient answer, that this chapter speaks very clearly of that extensive conversion of the Gentile nations which is peculiar to the times of the gospel.

VIII. As the prophecies concerning the Messiah's enemies contain two very different things, namely, the opposition that should be made by those enemies, and the defeat of that opposition; the first of these implies the persecution of the Messiah's church, and the second her legal establishment, by attaining the protection and countenance of authority. When it is foretold that the designs of the Messiah's enemies should be held in derision, and prove vain things; that they should be broken as a potter's vessel; that they should become the Messiah's footstool; that their heads should be wounded in many countries; that four carpenters should be provided to fray and cast out the four horns, representing the persecuting powers, Psal. ii. cx., Zech. i.: all these things imply, that, in process of time, they who had employed their power against the cause of the Messiah, should be deprived of their power, in which case it behoved to be transferred to others; or made to employ it in favour of the cause which they had opposed. This is also implied in the above-cited predictions of the ruin of idolatry, importing, that the abettors and worshippers of idols would be ashamed and afraid to profess any regard to them, that they would cast them to the moles and to the bats, and that God would famish all the gods of the heathen, and make their very names to be no more remembered, Isa. ii. xl., Zeph. ii. 11, Zech. xiii. 2. But besides the prophetic threatenings, the revolution in view is foretold in many prophetic promises concerning the honour which the kings of the nations would pay to God, to His Messiah, and His Zion; shewing, that all the kings of the earth would praise the Lord when they should hear the words of His mouth, Psal. cxxxviii.; that the kings of many nations would hearken with reverence to the Messiah, and would arise

and worship, Isa. xlix. lii.; that the Gentiles would come to Zion's light, and kings to the brightness of her rising; that the Gentiles would see her righteousness, and all kings her glory; and that the Gentile kings and queens would be nursing-fathers and nursing-mothers to her, Isa. lx. lxii. xlix.

Sect. III. *Of the Messiah's enemies, and particularly of the unbelieving Jews.*

The unbelief of the Jews, or of the prevailing party among them, and their opposition to the Messiah and His doctrine, are foretold in various predictions; several of which have been already mentioned, and others remain yet to be considered; the chief of which it is useful to collect here in one view, under various heads, according as they treat more directly of one or other of the following subjects,—viz. 1. The bad treatment that people would give the Messiah in His life, and at His death; 2. The substitution of the Gentiles in the room of the Jews as to spiritual privileges; 3. The inexcusable blindness of the Jewish rulers and teachers at the time of the enlightening of the Gentiles; and, more particularly, 4. Their keeping the writings of the prophets in their hands as a sealed book, without understanding the chief scope and subject of them.

I. As to the treatment the Messiah was to meet with from the Jews, it is described in several prophecies as the very reverse of what He would meet with from the Gentiles; as particularly in the above explained 49th of Isaiah, where it is foretold, on the one hand, that the Gentiles would be gathered to Him; and, on the other hand, that the Jews, instead of being gathered to Him, would despise and abhor Him; and that He should spend

His strength and labour among them in vain. And in Isa. liii. it is not in the name of any other nation, but of his own nation, that the prophet says, "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. We hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." All which expressions explain what unbelievers he complains of, v. 1 of that chapter, "Who hath believed our report?" But not to multiply references to particular forecited predictions of the Messiah's maltreatment from the Jews, it is sufficient to observe, that if we compare together the prophetic account of the place of the Messiah's residence, of His sufferings, and of the more immediate instruments of those sufferings, it will be evident that a good many of the above mentioned predictions of the sufferings of the Messiah imply predictions of the unbelief of the Jews.

II. Their unbelief is also implied in the predictions of the substitution of the Gentiles in their room: as when it is declared, that on account of the sins of the Jews, God would move them to jealousy, by choosing another people, Deut. xxxii. 21; that the Jews should leave *their name* for a curse to God's chosen people, whom He would call, not by their name, but by another name, Isa. lxv. 15; and that the Gentiles would crowd into Zion as a numerous family of new children, supplying the room of her former children, which she is said to have lost, Isa. xlix. 20, 21.

Whereas, in the prophetic style, the Gentile world is called a *wilderness*, with regard to its spiritual desolation under Heathenism, and in opposition to the vineyard or fruitful field of the church; it is remarkable, that in some prophecies it is foretold at the same time, that the wilderness or forest should become a fruitful

field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest; as particularly in Isa. xxxii. 15, which speaks of the time of the pouring down of the Spirit from on high; and Isa. xxix. 17, which will be proved afterwards to contain several predictions of the enlightening of the Gentiles. And both these predictions have a remarkable conformity to Isa. xliii. 19, 20, etc., where the creatures inhabiting the wilderness are represented as honouring God, and as a people whom He has formed for Himself, to shew forth His praise; while Israel is represented as weary of Him, v. 22, and *their teachers* as transgressing against Him, v. 28, and provoking Him to reject them.

III. But besides what is said in Isa. xliii. about the Jewish teachers, there are other remarkable predictions, which speak of the time of the enlightening of the Gentiles as a time of inexcusable wilful blindness among the Jewish teachers or rulers, or both. Thus in Isa. xlii, where the Gentiles are mentioned as waiting for God's law, delivered by the Messiah, v. 4, Israel is spoken of as disobedient to that law, v. 24; and particularly God's professed *servants* and *messengers*, titles that characterise the Jewish teachers by their office, notwithstanding their mal-administration, are represented as having a divine revelation proposed to them, and rejecting it; v. 19, "Who is blind, but my servant? etc. Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not." And in Isa. lvi, which speaks of the time when God's house should be a house of prayer for all people, Israel's watchmen and shepherds are represented as "blind, ignorant, and dumb; sleeping, lying down, and *loving to slumber*," v. 10, 11; and the sequel charges them with an insatiable, unbounded love of temporal advantages, which, it is evi-

dent from the nature of the thing, behoved to be a chief cause of men's looking only for a temporal Messiah.

IV. What is said in Isa. lvi. about the Jewish watchmen and shepherds as *loving to slumber*, implying that their slumber would be voluntary and wilful, gives light to what is foretold about their deep sleep, Isa. xxix. 10, 11, etc., where the prophet speaks of a time when the prophetic books should be in the hands of the Jews as an open book in the hands of one who cannot read, or a sealed book in the hands of one who can read if the book were not sealed. That the blindness here foretold should relate, not merely to some less considerable part but to the chief subject and scope of the prophecies, is evident from various expressions in this context; as particularly from ver. 11, "And the vision *of all* is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed;" and ver. 14, "The wisdom of their wise men shall fail, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." That this prediction, and the chapter which contains it, do not relate to the time of the Babylonish invasion and captivity, or at least not to that time only, but to the time of the enlightening of the Gentiles, is evident from several predictions in the latter part of the chapter, evidently relating to that subject, ver. 17, 18, 24; and several characters of the prophetic style usual in speaking of that time, ver. 19, 20, 23. At the time of the Babylonish invasion and captivity the prophecies of Jeremiah were far from being like a sealed book: for though they were not believed by many, yet they were sufficiently understood; and it was on that account that that prophet's enemies were so enraged against him: besides that at that time the Jews had several enlightened prophets and seers, such as Jeremiah himself in Judea, and Ezekiel and Daniel at Babylon; whereas the time mentioned in

this 29th of Isaiah is a time when such advantages were wanting. From all which it appears, that though the description of the siege of Jerusalem, which takes up the first eight verses of this chapter, should be supposed to be of itself applicable either to the siege of that place by the Babylonians, or by the Romans; the latter part of the chapter restricts the description to the last of these sieges, to which several things in the description itself have plainly a greater conformity: and whereas idolatry was one of the chief and most immediate procuring causes of the Babylonish captivity, the desolation described in this chapter is imputed to various other provocations, but idolatry is not once mentioned.

There seems to be a remarkable conformity between what is said in Isa. xxix, about the sealed book, and what is said about sealing the law and testimony in Isa. viii. 16, in which chapter the Jews are represented as not speaking according to the law and the testimony, because there is no light in them, ver. 20. And though the enlightening of the Gentiles is not so expressly mentioned in this context, yet it is necessarily implied in ver. 14, where it is said, that at the same time that the Lord would be for a stone of stumbling to both houses of Israel, he would be a sanctuary to some other people, who being distinct from both houses of Israel, can be no other than the Gentiles. What the prophet says about the stone of stumbling is the more remarkable, because it is affirmed not only of one, but of both the houses of Israel, and of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in particular.

Several other predictions relating to the unbelief of the Jews, are contained in passages which speak of a time when the sons of the Jewish church should be obliged to acknowledge, that for their transgressions their mother was put away, Isa. l. 2; and when the covenant

between God and that people should be broken, which is mixed with a prediction formerly explained, relating to the Messiah's sufferings, Zech. xi. 10. And whereas the 6th of Isaiah contains one of the fullest descriptions of a future blindness and desolation of the Jews; though perhaps it does not speak so clearly as some other prophecies of the time when this was to happen, yet ver. 3, which speaks of "the *whole earth* as full of the glory of the Lord," seems to point at the time when the Gentile world, which is by much *the greatest part of the earth*, should be filled with the knowledge of that glory.

The predictions of the unbelief of the Jews contain a considerable number of facts and circumstances relating to the extent of it, and the chief abettors of it, as well as its causes and effects. As to the extent of it, though it is foretold, that too great a number would be chargeable with it, it is not represented as so universal but that the Messiah's forerunner would have considerable success in preparing the way before Him, and that the Messiah himself would confirm the covenant with many, restoring the preserved of Israel: and several predictions plainly suppose, that there should be a true church of God, and of the Messiah, in Judea, to which the enlightened Gentiles would have due regard, as their mother-church, Isa. xlix. ii. 2, 3; Zech. viii. 23. As it is foretold, that the chief promoters of Jewish unbelief would be the Jewish teachers and rulers, who are called *God's messengers*, and *Israel's shepherds* and *watchmen;* so they are described by their hypocrisy, their superstition, Isa. xxix; their neglect of God's law and testimony, Isa. viii; their sensuality, their covetousness, Isa. lvi; their spiritual pride, Isa. lxv. 5, and intemperate false zeal, Isa. lxvi. 5: all which things would incline them to reject a Messiah that would appear in a state of so great

humiliation, "seeing no beauty in Him why they should desire Him." Transferring to human invention, and consequently to human tradition, the regard due to divine revelation, and practical preference of temporal advantages, expected by a temporal Messiah, to the spiritual blessings of God's covenant; which evils,—which were in fact among the chief causes why the Jews rejected Christ,—are mentioned by the prophets among the chief sins that would occasion that people's rejecting the Messiah; particularly in Isa. xxix, and Isa. lvi, where that people are described as "teaching the fear of God by the precept of men; and as greedy persons that could never have enough:" it is foretold, that they would reject and despise the Messiah himself; that they would look on Him as one smitten and afflicted of God on His own account; that they would put Him to death, and maltreat Him at His death, in the manner described from the prophecies in the former chapter; and that they would cast out of their society his disciples, on pretence of zeal for the glory of God, Isa. lxv. 5. It is the more probable that this last particular, relating to the Messiah's disciples, is the thing meant in Isa. lxv. 5, because, after speaking of men who should be ejected by their Jewish brethren, the conversion of the Gentiles is not only the chief thing mentioned in the following sentences, but it is mentioned as an appearance of God for the joy of these ejected Jews; and is proposed in promises for their encouragement. Which way of proposing the promises of the calling of the Gentiles, is an intimation, that the persons in view were those who were to be employed as instruments in fulfilling these promises; besides, that those persons being here characterised by their trembling at God's word, this is the character given, in the foregoing context, of those to

whom God expresses greater regard than to the Jewish temple, and who are opposed to the idolizers of that temple, and of the service that belonged, and was confined to it.

Though it is foretold, in Isa. xxix, that the chief scope of the prophecies should be to the Jews as the words of a sealed book, it is not said, that they should be permitted to go so far astray as to give up wholly with those sacred writings; but, on the contrary, these writings are supposed to continue still in their hands. At the same time, various strong expressions in this chapter appear peculiarly applicable to the amazing delusions and fables for which that people have been so remarkable for many ages. And whereas the name of that people was formerly the name of God's church, from whom, through his mercy, the Gentiles received the knowledge of his will; this makes it the more observable, that it should be foretold, as it is in Isa. lxv. 14, that the name of that people should be one day the object of the particular aversion of the true people of God.

In collecting and comparing the chief predictions of the final desolation and dispersion of the Jews, it will be sufficient to mention *more briefly* such of these predictions as were formerly explained under other heads, that we may consider some other predictions of the same event more particularly.

I. One of the most remarkable and most decisive predictions on this subject is that in the forecited 9th of Daniel, which at the same time speaks of the rebuilding of the Jewish city, after the return from Babylon, and of a second destruction, both of the city and sanctuary, after the cutting off of the Messiah.

II. That destruction is also foretold in several of the

forecited predictions of that people's unbelief; as particularly in Isa. xlii, which speaks so much both of the enlightening of the Gentiles, and of the blindness of the Jews; and foretells, that Israel should be given for a prey to the robbers, that the strength of battle should be poured upon him, and consume him. In Isa. lvi, which speaks of the blindness of the Jewish watchmen and shepherds, all the beasts of the field are represented as gathered together to devour them. In Isa. viii, where it is foretold, that the Lord would be a sanctuary to the Gentiles, and a stone of stumbling to the Jews, among various other expressions about the future desolation of that people, it is foretold that they should be driven to darkness. In Isa. xliii, which speaks of the Gentile wilderness as honouring God, and of Israel as weary of him, and their teachers as transgressing against him, it is foretold, that the princes of the sanctuary should be profaned, Jacob given to the curse, and Israel to reproaches: and in Isa. lxv, where it is said, that the Jews should leave their name for a curse to God's chosen, it is foretold, that that nation should be slain; which must be meant of the dissolution of their civil polity, because it is foretold in other passages, that they should never be wholly extinguished.

III. The 28th of Deuteronomy and 29th of Isaiah contain circumstantial descriptions, the first of sieges of all the Jewish cities, the second of a siege of Jerusalem, ending in extraordinary desolation: and in both these prophecies there are several characters which shew, that it is the desolation by the Romans that is chiefly intended. In Deut. xxviii. it is foretold, that God would bring a nation from far, from the end of the earth, against the Jews, ver. 49: who would besiege them in all their gates, until their high and fenced walls should

come down through all the land, ver. 52; so that they should be plucked out of the land, ver. 63, and scattered among all people from one end of the earth to the other, ver. 64. Among various arguments for applying this prediction to the destruction of Judea by the Romans, it is remarkable, that in ver. 68, it is foretold, that, after the sieges and dispersion above mentioned, the Jews should be sent in ships to Egypt, to be sold to their enemies for slaves; which was literally fulfilled by the Romans; whereas, at the time of the Babylonish captivity, the Jews went to Egypt, not in ships, but on horses; not to be sold to enemies, but to seek shelter from the Egyptians as their friends and allies: which is much taken notice of, and much blamed in various places of scripture. Whereas it is said, ver. 49, that the enemy there mentioned should come from far, even from the end of the earth; this is evidently much more applicable to the Romans than to the Chaldeans; and the words in that verse, about that enemy's coming as an eagle, may reasonably be considered, according to the style of prophetic writings, as an allusion to the Roman ensign; seeing it is twice repeated, ver. 59, that the judgments threatened in this chapter would be of long continuance; and seeing it is foretold, that the Jews would be left small in number, ver. 62, and that they would find no ease nor rest for the sole of their foot on their dispersion: all these things are arguments for understanding the dispersion by the Romans, rather than that by the Babylonians, which continued but about seventy years, was not attended with so much slaughter, and did not put the Jews into so unsettled and wandering a condition, considering the favours they met with after that captivity from their conquerors. The Christian interpretation of this chapter may be farther confirmed by several things

in the following chapters of this book; seeing chap. xxix. ver. 24, speaks of the future desolation of the Jews as exceeding singular, raising the astonishment of all nations, and making them inquisitive about the causes of it: and whereas the song of Moses, in chap. xxxii, which was mentioned before as foretelling the enlightening of the Gentiles, and the unbelief of the Jews, foretells also the desolation of that people, it is observable, that that song is mentioned no less than three or four times, as a song that should be left for a witness against that people, in the event of their apostasy from God, chap. xxxi. 19, 21, 26, 28.

The 29th of Isaiah, in describing a siege of Jerusalem, gives such an account of the multitude of nations fighting against it, of their singular eagerness to destroy it, and of the low condition to which they would reduce that people, as is manifestly more applicable to the second destruction of that place by the Romans, than to the first by the Babylonians; but, which is still more decisive, the latter part of the chapter contains various characters of the times of the enlightening of the Gentiles, and of the blindness of the Jews.

IV. Whereas there are several predictions of the desolation of Judea, concerning which it is not so easy to determine, at first view, whether they are meant of the first or the second desolation of that country; there are other predictions, where there is no room for that difficulty, namely, the predictions that were delivered after the Babylonish captivity; of which that in the forecited 9th of Daniel may be reckoned the chief; but there are several others in Zechariah and Malachi.

In the 11th of Zechariah, which was proved before to treat of the times and of the sufferings of the Messiah, there is a remarkable prediction of a second desolation of

Judea, that should be of long continuance, ver. 6, attended with the breaking of the covenant between God and that people, ver. 10, and of their union with one another, ver. 14; so that they are said to be delivered every one into his neighbour's hand. All which things, taken complexly, are not applicable to any disaster that intervened between the Babylonish captivity and the final destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

In Zechariah xiii, after a remarkable prediction of the Messiah's sufferings, there is a prediction of a desolation of Judea that would be very singular and extensive, ver. 8, 9, and whatever difficulty* there may be about two different interpretations of the close of chap. xiii, according as the cutting off there mentioned may be supposed to relate to a spiritual or temporal disaster, each of which interpretations favour the main argument in view: it is evident, that the beginning of the 14th chapter speaks literally of enemies gathered from all nations, besieging and sacking Jerusalem, and carrying the half (or a vast number) of its inhabitants into captivity. Whereas the following 3d verse speaks of the Lord's fighting against those nations that had fought against Jerusalem, seeing it is not at all said, that this should be in order to a speedy restoration or any restoration at all, of that city; this prediction may be explained by various others, which speak of the righteous judgments to be inflicted on the incorrigible among other nations as well as the Jews; and by what is foretold, ver. 16, of this same chapter, which shew, that they who were left of the nations which came against Jerusalem, would be brought to worship the Lord of

* A chief cause of the difficulty hinted at, is the good account given in the last verse of chap. 13. of those that should escape the cutting off mentioned in ver. 8. If that good account be supposed to relate to the most distant good effects of the calamities of the Jews, the difficulty seems to be in a good measure removed.

hosts. That this chapter treats of the times of the Messiah, and contains very remarkable predictions relating to those times, is not only evident from its being a continuation of the important prophecies in the two preceding chapters, formerly considered, and from the last-cited prediction, ver. 16, of the enlightening of the Gentile nations, but also from what is further foretold on that subject in ver. 8, 9, which speak of living waters going out from Jerusalem at the time in view, towards the different parts of the world; and shew, that at that time, "the Lord should be King over all the earth; and that there should be one Lord, and his name one;" besides the remarkable prediction, at the close of the chapter, formerly proved to relate to the abolishing of the ceremonial law.

In the book of Malachi, there is a remarkable hint at a rejection of the Jews that should be cotemporary with the conversion of the Gentiles, Mal. i. 10, 11; and in chap. iii, a prediction of a time when there should be a more visible difference betwixt the righteous and the wicked, than what is usually made in the course of providence; which is singularly applicable to the difference made between the disciples and the enemies of Christ at the destruction of Jerusalem, chap. iii. 18; but especially the last chapter gives an alarming account of an awful day of the Lord that should consume the wicked, chap. iv. 1; particularly the proud, leaving them neither root nor branch; where, though the incorrigible party among the Jews are not expressly mentioned, yet seeing this book of prophecy speaks chiefly all along, not of the sins of the Gentiles, of whom it foretells that God's name would be made great among them, but of the Jews; and the awful day mentioned in this last chapter, is mentioned as cotemporary with the appearance of the Sun

of righteousness, formerly proved to be none other than the Messiah; all these things, especially when compared with the above-cited predictions, about the unbelief and desolation of the Jews, give good ground to look on them as the proud and the wicked of whom the passage in view is meant.

V. Whereas it is a primary character of the day of the Messiah, that it would be a day of singular joy to God's people, several other prophecies, Isa. xxxv. 4, lxi. 2, lxvi. 6, besides that last cited from Malachi, speak of the same day as an awful day of just recompence to the enemies of God, of his Messiah, and of Zion. There are some remarkable passages which seem to be of particular use for explaining these different views that are given so oft of the same day; as particularly Isa. lxvi, (which speaks so much of the calling of the Gentiles,) ver. 14, "Then the hand of the Lord shall be known towards his servants, and his indignation towards his enemies;" and Isa. lxv. from ver. 13 to ver. 17, where the same time is described as a time of feasting, rejoicing, and singing for joy of heart to God's servants; and as a time of hunger, thirst, shame, crying, and sorrow of heart, to them who would despise the calls of God's mercy; and the context was formerly proved to relate to the times of the Messiah. Mal. iii. 18, has such a conformity to these passages, that it is an argument that the context to which it belongs is parallel to them, or relates to the same times and events: "Then shall ye discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."

As it is suitable to the best rules of interpretation, to explain the more general threatenings against Zion's enemies, by the passages which tell more particularly who those enemies are, namely, the abettors of Pagan

idolatry and Jewish unbelief; so there is a peculiar reason for understanding threatenings of temporal judgments against Zion's enemies, as more specially intended against the obstinate Jews, considering the tenure of the charter by which they held Canaan, which contained the penalty of expulsion in case of rebellion and apostacy: so that predictions of their national unbelief, virtually imply predictions of their national desolation.

VI. There are three or four remarkable characters, which prove a certain national dispersion of the Jews, mentioned in some prophecies to be different from that occasioned by the Babylonish captivity: for whereas that was the first national dispersion of that people, and happened long before the times of the Messiah, and of the fourth monarchy; and was but of short continuance; some predictions speak of a dispersion, which they mention as a *second dispersion* happening after the appearance of the Messiah, and of the fourth monarchy, and of very long continuance.

1. The dispersion mentioned Isa. xi. 11, etc., is distinguished from the Babylonish dispersion by several of these characters; for it is mentioned as a second dispersion, seeing the recovery or restoration from it, which is the thing more directly foretold, is mentioned as a second restoration; and both the dispersion and restoration here spoken of, are mentioned as cotemporary with the enlightening of the Gentiles by the root of Jesse, which was proved formerly to be the chief subject of that chapter. But besides all this, whereas the enlightening of the Gentiles was to continue through all ages, and, from small beginnings, after much opposition, to arrive at its utmost perfection on earth, by the full conversion of all the Gentile nations, this prophecy seems plainly to make the restoration of the Jews, which it describes

ver. 11, cotemporary with that happy period, the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles, which it described ver. 10, by the two blessed characters of universal peace, and universal light.

Though the verse that intervenes between the prediction that implies the universal conversion of the Gentiles, and that which foretells the restoration of the Jews, as happening *in the same day*, or about the same time, speaks of the root of Jesse, or of the Messiah; yet there is nothing in that verse that restricts its meaning to the Messiah's first appearance; which is the thing mentioned in the first verse of the chapter; and it is very agreeable to the scope of the prophecies to mix, in one context, events relating to the beginning of the Messiah's kingdom, and to the highest advancement of it.

2. The dispersion mentioned Dan. xii. 7, is distinguished from the Babylonish dispersion, by all the characters above mentioned. It must be posterior to that dispersion, because the prediction itself is posterior to the decree of Cyrus, which authorised the return from that dispersion, as appears from Dan. xi. 1, compared with Ezra. i. 1.

Then again, the dispersion of the holy people is mentioned here, (in Dan. xii. 7,) in answer to a remarkable question in the preceding verse, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" And the answer implies that when the dispersion of that people should be at an end, and not till then, or about that time, the other prophetic wonders in view should be at an end likewise. Concerning which wonders, it might be sufficient to our present purpose, to observe, from chap. xi. 4, that some at least of these wonders were to happen after the fall, not only of the first and second, but also of the third or Grecian monarchy; which is enough to put the end of the dispersion

in view at a great distance from the dispersion caused by the Babylonians. But it is proper to observe farther, that the chief wonders foretold by Daniel could not be finished till all the kingdoms *under the whole heaven* should submit themselves to God and the Messiah, Dan. vii. 27, ii. 44; which confirms the above interpretation of Isa. xi. that the end of the dispersion of the Jews would be cotemporary with the full conversion of the Gentiles, or would happen much about that time.

3. The end of the dispersion of the Jews is not only made cotemporary with the end of the prophetic wonders in general, but more particularly with the end of what is called *time, times, and an half,* Dan. xii. 7. The meaning of those words will be considered more particularly afterwards; it is sufficient at present to observe, that according to Dan. vii. 26, the end of *time, times, and an half,* would be the end of apostacy, delusion, and persecution, and would be the time of the universal conversion of the nations: so that this affords another proof, that the final restoration of the Jews should be cotemporary with the conversion of the fulness of the Gentiles.

4. The 11th and 12th verses of this chapter shew, that there would be about twelve or thirteen centuries from an unhappy revolution, characterised by the taking away of the daily sacrifice, and the setting up of desolating or (as the word also signifies) astonishing abomination, to a time characterised only by the blessedness of those who should see it, ver. 12. It will be proved afterwards from Dan. vii. 26, that the characters of the beginning of this calculation are really and singularly applicable to the setting up of the power there said to continue *time, times, and half;* and it is evident that the good character given here, ver. 12, of the end of the calculation

is singularly applicable to the two things mentioned in the context, namely, the full conversion of the Gentiles, and the restoration of the Jews. Hence it follows, that by *time, times, and an half,* are meant about twelve or thirteen centuries, which make, in round numbers, about three years and an half, or a year, years, and an half year, reckoning as many natural years in every prophetic year as there are days in a natural year, according to prophetic style in other places, and particularly in the above-explained 9th chapter of this same book. This puts the end of the dispersion of the Jews, as well as the cotemporary end of delusion and apostacy, and the beginning of universal light and peace, at the distance of twelve or thirteen centuries from a certain remarkable time, which however not particularly known, is declared very plainly to be posterior to the fall of the Roman empire. All these things, it is hoped, will be made more plain in the following section: it was proper to give some account of them here, to shew that the prophets foretell a dispersion of the Jews, posterior to what was caused by the Babylonians, cotemporary with the times of the Messiah, happening in the time of the fourth or Roman monarchy, (as is evident from Dan. ix. 26, 27,) and continuing many ages after its fall; as in effect that dispersion is known to have lasted now near the third part of the time since the creation: so that when it is at an end, there will indeed be *an end* of one of the greatest *wonders* in the history of mankind; which is an argument of the justness of the prophetic style on this subject.

It appears from what has been said, that the predictions of the desolation and dispersion of the Jews, as well as the other predictions formerly explained, are a considerable number, and contain a considerable variety

of facts and circumstances, relating to the destruction of the Jewish city and sanctuary, the time and instruments of it, the disasters of the siege of Jerusalem, the subsequent dispersion of that people through all nations, the hardships attending it, its long continuance, and the continuance of the distinction betwixt that people and all others under it, and their inexcusable blindness as to the chief procuring causes of it.

As it is foretold, that the destruction of their city and sanctuary should happen after the death of the Messiah, in the time of the fourth or Roman monarchy, which monarchy should be the chief instrument of that destruction, to which at the same time their own intestine divisions would greatly contribute; so it is foretold, that their enemies would besiege them with vast armies, with uncommon eagerness, Dan ix. vii; Zech. i. xi; Isa. xlix. 26, xxix; Deut. xxviii, and make them feel the most grievous calamities of war; that after the taking of their chief city, multitudes of them should be sent in ships to Egypt, to be sold for slaves to their enemies; that they should be scattered among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; that they should be cast away because they did not hearken to God, and should be *wanderers* among the nations; that they should be *sifted* among all nations, as corn is sifted in a *sieve*, Deut. xxviii. 64; Hosea ix. 17; Amos ix. 9; that in this dispersion they should not find a place to rest the sole of their feet; that the dispersion should continue to the time called the end of prophetic wonders, being the time of the universal conversion of the Gentiles, when all the kingdoms under the whole heaven would submit to God and his Messiah, and the time of the end of a desolating abomination that was to continue about twelve or thirteen centuries, and was not to begin

till after the fall of the Roman empire, Deut. xxviii. 65; Dan. xii: which two things prove, that that dispersion was to continue above sixteen or seventeen centuries at least, whatever more.

Their preservation as a body of people distinct from all others, notwithstanding so amazing a dispersion, is foretold in several prophecies, which shew, that though God would make an end of all nations, he would not make an end of them; that they should never cease from being a people; that though they should be sifted, like corn, among all nations, yet the least grain should not fall upon the earth; that they should never be utterly destroyed, Jer. xxx. 11, xlvi. 28, xxxi. 36. All which is also necessarily supposed in the predictions which shew, that they should be wanderers among the nations, and that they should be "an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations," Amos ix. 9, also ver. 8; Deut. xxviii. 37; implying plainly, that they should still be distinguished from other nations: and it is evident, that the continuance of this distinction of that people is supposed in the joyful predictions of their restoration. As to their refusing to own the true principal cause of their calamities, this was proved from Isa. xlii, in the explication formerly given of the last part of it.

SECT. IV. *Predictions concerning opposition to the true religion, after the conversion of the Gentiles.*

Of the book of Daniel.

I. The book of Daniel contains various prophecies, shewing, that after the conversion of the Gentile nations; after the fall of the fourth or Roman empire, and its division into various kingdoms, the chief of which

are reckoned about ten in number; there should arise certain exceeding eminent seducing powers, one or more, enjoying temporal dominion; who would be singularly remarkable for their opposition to the kingdom of God and of the Messiah, being chief ringleaders of apostasy, delusion, and persecution; and whose powerful opposition to the truth would continue for many centuries of years, to the time frequently called by this prophet the *time of the end,* and characterised as the time of the universal conversion of nations, Jews and Gentiles, to the true religion.

In proving this, it is of use to give summaries of the chief prophecies in this book, which relate to the four monarchies, or any one or two of them, and to shew that all of them reach down to *the end* now described.

1. In the first prophecy, in chapter ii., the four monarchies are represented by the four parts of a great image: 1. The head of gold; 2. The breast and arms of silver; 3. The belly and thighs of brass; 4. The legs of iron; and the feet, part iron and part clay. The kingdom of the Messiah, as was proved formerly, is represented in this prophecy, by a stone cut out without hands, becoming in process of time a great mountain, and filling *the whole earth.* The opposition of the fourth monarchy to the Messiah's kingdom, especially the opposition made in the lower or latter times of that monarchy,* is evidently supposed in what is said of the stone smiting the image on his feet, which are a part of the representation of the fourth or last monarchy; and the stone's becoming, in consequence of that victory, a great mountain, *filling the earth:* which things plainly import, that the iron and clay feet of the fourth empire, after the time of

* Bas Empire.

its division, ver. 41, and the empire of the wonderful stone, would be opposite powers; the former being an obstacle to the growth of the latter; and the latter growing so as to fill the earth, by the total defeat of the former.

These things shew, that this prophecy reaches to *the great end* formerly described, or the time of the universal conversion of the nations: which conversion is not only foretold in the first and more obscure part of the prophecy, containing the vision about the stone that was to become a great mountain, and fill *the whole earth;* but also, in the second part of the prophecy, explaining the whole vision, and particularly explaining what relates to the stone, ver. 42, by a kingdom set up by the God of heaven, that should be universal and everlasting: and though the time of this *end* is not described by any number of years, yet it is evident in general, that it should be not only after the rise of the fourth empire, but after that division and weakening of it expressly mentioned ver. 41, 42, which imply its fall; and after the opposition made by these divided, mixed, and weaker powers, should be broken, all which things shew, that Daniel's words, ver. 28, calling the subject-matter of this prophecy, what should be in *the latter days*, are of the same import with the expressions about *the end* in subsequent predictions.

2. In the second general prophecy in chap. vii, the four monarchies, formerly represented by the four parts of an image, are represented by four great beasts, said to be diverse one from another; and the fourth, which was formerly represented by the legs of iron, and feet part iron and part clay, is here represented by a beast of singular strength, having great teeth of iron, nails of brass, (the metal emblematical of the Greeks in chap ii,) and

having ten horns, representing ten kings that should arise upon the above mentioned division of that empire, chap. ii. 41; which ten horns evidently correspond with the ten toes of the feet of the image, said to be broken by the stone, or by the kingdom of God, and so supposed to join in opposition to that kingdom.

The Messiah's kingdom is here foretold, at the end of the vision, ver 13 and 14, where the prophet joins together, as was proved before, in one comprehensive view, the Messiah's ascending to heaven, and His sitting at the right hand of God, till his enemies become his footstool: which is included in His receiving the universal everlasting kingdom mentioned ver. 14, and explained ver. 27, which speaks so plainly of the universal conversion of the nations to the service and obedience of the Most High.

The opposition made to that kingdom is described chiefly by the practices of a little horn, speaking great words, coming up among the ten horns of this fourth beast, making war with the saints, prevailing against them, ver. 21; speaking great words against the Most High, wearing out the saints of the Most High; thinking to change times and laws, and getting them into his hands, ver. 25.

The continuance of this opposition is described by two remarkable characters: the first is ver. 22, which shews, that this little horn of the fourth beast should prevail against the saints, until judgment was given to the saints, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom, ver. 22; which is explained ver. 27, by the universal conversion of the nations, there mentioned as following upon the fall of that little horn. The second character is in ver. 25, which shews that the power of that horn should continue time, times, and the dividing

of time, which will be explained afterwards. It is sufficient at present to observe, that the conclusion of these mysterious times is here made cotemporary with the time of the end, so oft mentioned in this book, or the time of the universal conversion; which is confirmed by the words immediately following the mention of that conversion, and the fall of the horn, that was the great obstacle to it, ver. 28, "Hitherto is *the end* of the matter," or of the chief subject-matter of prophecy, as we may reasonably understand the words.

Thus the second as well as the first prophecy in this book, relating to the four empires, reaches down below the end of the Roman empire, and to the universal empire of the Messiah, as the great end.

3. That the same thing may be said likewise of the third general prophecy, which is that in the 8th chapter, appears from ver. 17 and 19, where it is no less than thrice declared, that the vision should reach to the time of *the end*, or that the remotest events pointed at in it should happen toward that period: which remotest events, as appears from the close of the prediction and chapter, relate to an extraordinary adversary, who is said to *destroy*, or, as that word also signifies, to *corrupt* wonderfully; and is represented as eminent for policy and craft, ver. 25, and destroying many by peace or prosperity; as craft seems the more necessary to his becoming mighty, because when he is said to be so, it is added, but not by his own power; which seems to hint, that by craft and policy he would cause others make a surrender of their power to him: and whereas in ver. 9, he is said to wax exceeding great toward the south and the east, this seems to imply, that his rise would be from the north-west.*

* See Newton on this chapter.

4. As to the subsequent prophecies in this book, the remarkable prediction in Daniel ix, concerning the death of the Messiah, and the desolation of the Jews following upon it, expressly carries down to the time called *the consummation,* which appears to be the same with the time of *the end,* so oft mentioned elsewhere in this book; especially when this part of Dan. ix. is compared with Dan. xii. 7. And as to the long prophecy that takes up the last three chapters of this book, that it reaches to the *time of the end,* is evident from some expressions in every one of these chapters; as particularly chap. x. 14, about the *latter days,* chap. xi. 35, about the *time of the end,* and chap. xii. 4, where Daniel is commanded to seal the book, even to the *time of the end;* which shews, that the events foretold would not be all fulfilled till that time; and the sequel of that chapter speaks of the end of the wonders foretold in this prophecy, as cotemporary with the end of time, times, and an half, which appears from chap. vii. 25, 26, 27, to be the time of the universal conversion, and of the end of the dispersion of the holy people, and the end of desolating abominations.

II. After proving that the several general prophecies in this book reach to the time of the end, the objections that have been made against the true interpretation of these prophecies make it needful to prove, that the little horn of the fourth beast was to arise after the division of the Roman monarchy; for which proof it is sufficient to make out these two points: first, that the fourth beast represents that monarchy; and, second, that the time of the rise of the ten kings, represented by the ten horns of that beast, must be the time of the fall and division of that monarchy.

1. That the fourth beast represents the Roman monar-

chy, may be made out by many clear proofs; seeing the four beasts in chap. vii, as well as the four parts of the image in chap. ii, are expressly said to represent four kingdoms or monarchies, reckoning from the Babylonian as the first, (as is clearly declared chap. ii,) the Roman must necessarily be the fourth. If the third beast is the Greek empire, the Roman must be the fourth: and that this is the case, is evident from chap. vii. 6, where the third beast is said to have not only four wings of a fowl, but also four heads, implying that the empire represented by that beast would be divided into four parts; which shews it to be the Greek empire, though we had no other argument for this but the manifest conformity of the description with known history; but we have besides this, the prophet's own explication of the emblem in view, chap. viii. 8, compared with ver. 20, 21, where the beast with four notable horns is expressly declared to be the king of Grecia, who conquered and succeeded the Medo-Persians, and whose kingdom, after the death of the first king, viz. of Alexander himself, and his first successors, in whose time the empire was kept entire, was divided into four parts. It is evident also, that the fourth beast must represent the Roman monarchy, because it represents the last great or universal temporal monarchy, the monarchy that should be divided into ten parts, and that should not be broken by another fifth universal *temporal* monarchy like itself, but by that division into so many parts,* when conquered nations would shake off the yoke, and recover their sovereignty; and these parts are represented as continuing divided till the time of the end, when the stone, chap. ii, would smite the

* Dan. ii. 41, "And whereas thou sawest the feet and *toes*,—the kingdom shall be divided."

image upon his feet: and it may be proper to observe, that seeing the ten horns of the fourth beast manifestly correspond with the ten toes of the feet of the image, this shews that it is not absolutely necessary to be very precise in determining all the ten horns, or the ten kingdoms into which the fourth empire was divided.

2. That the time of the rise of the ten horns, is the time of the fall and division of the Roman empire, is evident, because it is said, ver. 24, "and the ten horns *out of this kingdom* are ten kings that shall *arise,*" etc.; and the name either of *horns* or of *kings* is not given in this prophecy to subordinate governors, but to sovereigns: and as the four horns of the third beast are explained chap. viii. 20, 21, &c. to be four parts into which the third empire was to be divided, the 2d chapter speaks expressly of the division of the fourth empire, ver. 41, 42, and of the weakening of it, in speaking of the feet or of the lower and later times of that empire: all which things, compared with uncontested facts relating to the fall and division of that empire, show that the time of that division is the time of the rise of the ten horns or ten kings mentioned in the prophecy.

Seeing it is said, ver. 24, that the little horn would arise *after* the ten kings, and would subdue three kings; these things give the following general characters of the time of the rise of the little horn, (without fixing the precise year,) namely, that it should be some time after the fall of the Roman empire, and the division of it into ten principal parts; and some time before, or at least about the time that three kings should be subdued by a little prince, to whom the characters in the context may be found singularly applicable.

III. In ascertaining what is meant by the little horn

a variety of circumstances in the description of it must be considered.

1. That by the little horn we are to understand, not one individual ruler, but a succession of rulers, enjoying the same power and authority, is evident from the prophetic style all along; the four parts of the image in chap. 2, and the four beasts, or four kings, as they are called, chap. vii. 17, signifying successions of many kings, whose history, taken all together, reaches to the time of the end. In the vision explained chap. 8, ver. 20 and 21, though there is but one ram and one he-goat, yet it is said, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia; and the rough goat is the king of Grecia; and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king;" implying, that the he-goat itself represents others besides the first king; as ver. 22, shews that the other four horns of that he-goat represent, not four particular persons, but four kingdoms. But besides all this, the great things said to be done by the little horn of the fourth beast, and the continuance of his power to the time of the universal conversion of the nations, put it beyond all question, that it is not one particular person that is meant, but a very long succession.

2. As to the place of the little horn's rise and reign, though the particular city or country is not named, yet seeing he is said to come up among the ten horns or kings who would share that old Roman empire among them, this shews, that the seat of the little horn should be within the bounds of that empire. That it would be in the western parts, may be convincingly made out from this one remark, that the eastern or Greek emperor cannot be that horn: for, 1*st*, He could not be called *little* among the ten; nor, 2*dly*, could he be said to come up

among them, and after them, both which are said of the horn so much insisted on; see ver. 8. and 24. See also below, remarks on ver. 12 of this 7th chapter, which distinguishes the other three empires, which were more eastern, from the fourth.

As what is said describes the little horn of the fourth beast in a general way, by the time of his rise, and the seat of his power; shewing, that he would rise after the fall and division of the fourth, or Roman empire, and rule in the western parts of that empire; so the other branches of the prediction concerning him, describe him by his misimproved penetration, his pretences to superiority over other princes, his temporal dominion, the singular nature of his government, his opposition to the true religion, the continuance of that opposition, and the end of it.

3. His uncommon, though ill improved, penetration and sagacity, and his pretence to superiority above the other horns, are implied in the words, ver. 8, 20, where he is called a horn that had eyes, eyes like the eyes of a man; a mouth speaking great things, ver. 8; very great things, ver. 20, the voice of whose great words raised the prophet's peculiar attention, ver. 11; and his look is said, ver. 20, to be more stout than his fellows, or than the other horns.

4. His possessing temporal dominion is not only implied in his being called a horn, though a little one, but also in his subduing three of the first ten kings, ver. 8 and 24, who are said to be plucked up by the roots before him, and whose dominions therefore must have become wholly his. But notwithstanding this he is never called any other than a little horn; nor is it said of him as of the little horn of the third beast, chap. viii. 9, that it waxed exceeding great. The greatness of this little

horn of the fourth beast is chiefly placed in great words and looks, joined with singular penetration or cunning; which is of itself a presumption, that the great things he was to accomplish would be owing to the power of others, voluntarily giving their power to him, after being seduced by him.

5. His opposition to the true religion is described by his making war with the saints, and prevailing against them until the time of the end; his speaking great words against the Most High; his wearing out the saints of the Most High; his thinking to change times and laws, which would be given unto hand until time, times and the dividing of time.

This description of the little horn shews, as to his general character, that he would be an adversary of the truth, of singular power and influence, attended with great success in heading the opposition that would be made to true religion. But whereas such opposition may be made by higher powers, either by supporting old evil laws in favour of delusion, or by reversing laws that have been established in favour of the truth, or by artificial changing and perverting of such laws; which last is the way of promoting apostasy by fraud and imposture, it is evident that this is the particular kind of opposition to the truth that that power is charged with, seeing it is obvious, that the *change* of laws and times which he was to contrive and promote, is mentioned as a *change* of laws relating to religion, and must be a change much to the worse; this being connected with the character given of him as an adversary of the truth, a speaker of very great words against the Most High himself, and a persecutor of his saints: and that his impostures should be promoted at first rather by fraud than force, and rather by corrupting and perverting former good

laws, than by open repealing of them, is not only insinuated in the word *changing laws*, but far more evident from the littleness of this horn or power, which behoved to make him incapable of imposing his change of laws on superior powers, otherwise than by mispersuasion and deceit.

To have only changed the laws of pagan worship, which could not easily have been changed to the worse by introducing into societies that were already pagan new objects, or new rules of worship, would neither have been so extraordinary a thing in itself, nor could it answer to the distinguishing characters of the change here foretold, seeing that change is supposed to be so singularly injurious to the Most High; which implies, that antecedently to that change, the laws were for his honour, and that the doctrine which enlightened the Gentiles had got the countenance of authority. So that this prophecy contains at least a probable argument, that the Messiah's doctrine should attain to the legal establishment before the fall of the fourth empire; seeing that after its fall and division, or about that time, false religion could not be promoted but by changing laws that had been established for some time in favour of the truth.

Speaking words against the Most High, when mentioned, as in this prophecy, to characterise a succession of powers opposing the truth, evidently signifies a public professing and authorising of corrupt doctrines; as perverse changing of religious laws and times signifies the authorising of corruptions, not only in doctrine, but worship; and speaking, not only words, but *great words, very great words*, against the Most High, very naturally denotes a sacrilegious claiming too high authority in government, intrenching on the prerogatives of the Most

High. So that the prophetic description of this little horn's opposition to the true religion, by changing and corrupting it, shews, that it would extend to the several chief branches of religion, doctrine, worship, and government. But of this last branch, more under the following article.

6. Whereas it is expressly foretold, ver. 24, that the little horn would claim, and actually obtain, a *spiritual* superiority, or a power of making and changing laws in religion, the whole tenor of the prophecy shews, that this *spiritual power* of that little horn, would not be confined to his own little temporal dominions, but should extend to those of the other superior horns, through their own voluntary submission. This appears from the prophetic account of the other horns, as involving themselves in the little horn's apostasy, and of the little horn's singular influence in conducting and promoting it.

That the other horns would involve themselves in the apostasy, is evident from what was formerly proved from chap. ii, namely, that the feet, and consequently the ten toes, of the image, representing the fourth empire, when divided into ten parts, should be smitten by the living stone, as being principal obstacles to the advancement of the kingdom of God.

Accordingly, in this 7th chapter, ver. 10, when Daniel, upon his seeing the Ancient of Days appearing, and the judgment set, attends to see the issue of the little horn's guilt, it is not merely that horn, but the *body* of the fourth beast, that he sees punished; which plainly supposes, that that *body*, and consequently the other horns, would involve themselves in the little horn's guilt, and concur in his apostasy: which is greatly confirmed by the little horn's warring and prevailing over the saints, until the very time of *the end*, ver. 21, 22; seeing, if the

other horns had been engaged in the party of the saints, or in the cause of truth, they behoved to be too many for one little horn.

If the little horn's power to change laws, were supposed confined to his own temporal dominions, there would be nothing so singular in this, to distinguish him from other absolute princes, promoting false religion among their own subjects, or to distinguish him from the other *greater* horns engaged, as was proved, in the same apostasy; whereas the whole conducting of that apostasy is appropriated to that horn, in such a way, as shews, that however little he was otherwise, the *greater* horns would implicitly submit to him in the matters of religion, as the only horn among them *that had eyes*, ver. 20, as their teacher or prophet, or (which was the ancient name of prophet) their *seer*, or chief overseer, ἐπίσκοπος; and that his acknowledged spiritual authority would be sovereign, and its influence on the apostasy as extensive as the temporal power of the horns concurring in it. It is he only that is directly charged with that apostasy. His power and influence in promoting it, next to the opposite power that finally defeated it, is the chief subject of the prophecy. The beast itself, and the other horns, however greater than he, engaged in the same bad cause, seem to be mentioned only by the by, or chiefly on account of their connection with him, to shew the time of his rise, the seat of his power, and his adherents. It is the *voice of his great words* that chiefly awakens the prophet's attention to the result of the judgment, ver. 11; his great words seem to be mentioned as chief causes of the evils that befall the body of the beast, mentioned in the same verse: it is his character that the prophet is chiefly inquisitive about, ver. 19 and 20: it is he only that is said to make war

against the saints, and to prevail against them, and that to *the end*, ver. 22: it is to his character that the interpreter of the vision hastens forward his explications; and it is on that alone he expatiates, scarcely saying any thing of the greater horns, but that they were so many kings.

In the explication of the vision, it is he only that is said to speak the great words, to wear out the saints, to change times and laws: it is into his hands that the power of making such changes is said to be *given*, and that for many ages. Seeing such power is given to one little horn, by a number of other greater horns, notwithstanding their natural jealousy and tenaciousness of power, this shews that that surrender of power would be voluntary, through false persuasion; that he who claimed it, with the *voice of very great words*, had a right to it; and that these other horns suffered the horn *that had eyes* to put out theirs. It is the dominion of the little horn that is represented, ver. 26, 27, as the great obstacle to the universal dominion of the Messiah, which must be raised on the ruins of that evil power. The taking away of the dominion of that little horn, mentioned ver. 26, which belongs to the interpretation of the vision, answers to the destroying of the body of the fourth beast itself, mentioned in ver. 11, which belongs to the vision: which is a farther proof, that the spiritual dominion of that one horn should be of much the same extent with the temporal dominions of the other horns of that beast. And whereas, when the fourth beast is slain and consumed, the lives of the other beasts are said to be prolonged for a season and time, though their dominion be taken away, this shews, that the fourth beast is considered here as consisting of western kingdoms, that never belonged to any of the first three eastern empires; and which not only

were the whole of the Roman empire, at its first greatness, but were reckoned more properly and strictly Roman after that empire was divided between the west and the east.

Though in ver. 19, the fourth beast is said to have nails of brass; which, as was observed before, is the metal emblematical of the Greek empire; yet it is not the nails, but the ten horns, that represent the different parts of the divided Roman empire in this chapter, at ver. 24. And whereas the vision represents that empire in different parts of its duration, its singular greatness, its iron teeth, and brazen nails, being in the first part of the description, are justly referred, on that and other accounts, to the first part of its duration, and the after mentioned ten horns to the latter part of it; at which time it is that the fourth beast is here said to be slain, and is at the same time expressly distinguished from the eastern kingdoms, whose lives are said to be prolonged for a season. But of this distinction more afterwards. It is sufficient at present to observe, that the fourth beast being thus distinguished from the eastern kingdoms, ver. 11, 12, and the destruction of that fourth beast, ver. 11, being explained by the destruction of the dominion of the little horn, ver. 26, this proves, that the spiritual dominion of that horn should extend to the other western horns of that fourth beast, but not to the eastern kingdom that had been formerly parts of the three first beasts. And it is exceedingly remarkable, that the destruction of this dominion is represented, both in the vision and interpretation, as an effect of extraordinary divine interposition, described in words resembling the New Testament descriptions of the general judgment; shewing, that though these two great

events would be really different, yet the one would be a kind of emblem of the other.

If, to what is said, we add, that the long duration of the little horn's dominion, (to be explained under the following article,) proves its vast extent, and that it behoved to be supported by *greater* temporal horns, or powers, than the little horn itself; all these things put together, shew, that almost every part of the description of this horn contradicts the supposition that would confine his spiritual power, or power of changing religious laws and times, to his own little temporalities. And what has been proved concerning the singular spiritual nature of his power, the vast extent of it, the cunning needful to acquire it, the enormous ambition of aspiring to it, is a key to the above-mentioned more general expressions, about his being *diverse* from the other ten horns,—his not being reckoned of their number, though said to come up among them,—his being a horn that had eyes like the eyes of a man, a mouth speaking great things, and looks more stout than his fellows.

7. The duration of this little horn's dominion is here described by two characters; one is, that it should last to the universal conversion of the nations; the other is that it should last *time, times, and the dividing of time;* which is so like the words in Dan. xii. 7, *time, times, and an half,* that they cannot reasonably be supposed to have different meanings; and which may be proved to be the same with the 1290 prophetic days, or natural years, mentioned in the context, by the two following reasonings joined together.

(1.) Though the prophecy in Dan. vii. does not use these particular words, the *desolating abomination,* yet it describes the setting up of the little horn as a thing to which that character would really belong in a singular manner;

and at the same time shows, ver. 25, 26, 27, that from the setting up of that desolating abomination to its fall, and to the cotemporary universal conversion, there would be time, times, and the dividing (or the half) of time*—On the other hand,

The prediction, Dan. xii. 11, though it does not expressly mention the time of setting up of the little horn of the fourth beast, yet it begins a calculation from what Dan. vii. proves to be singularly applicable to that time, namely, the time of setting up what is, by way of eminence, the desolating and astonishing desolation; and shews, that from that time to the *time of the end*, or, which has been proved to be the same, the time of the universal conversion, there would be 1290 prophetic days or natural years.

This shews, that *time, times, and an half*, are the same with 1290 years; because they have the same beginning and the same end.

(2.) Another confirmation of the explication given of *time, times, and an half*, may be drawn from the prophetic style in calculations, and from the most natural meaning of *time*, when applied for signifying a determined duration. Seeing the most remarkable divisions of duration, are the divisions by days, weeks, months, or years, it is reasonable to suppose, that the word *time*, in the passages in view, must denote some one or other of these divisions: and that *time, times, and an half* must signify such a division, thrice repeated, and one half superadded; such as, three days, weeks, months, or years, and an half; whence it follows, that if any other of these divisions less than a year, though repeated as the prediction directs, is too short for this calculation in view, which reaches downward so far as to the *time of the end*,

* See Dan. iv. 16 and 25, *seven times* signifies seven years.

and comprehends so great revolutions; it must be suitable to the best rules of interpretation to suppose, that *time, times, and a half*, signifies three prophetic years and an half, or three times 360, or 365 natural years, and about 180, or 184 such years added.

This coming is so near to 1290 years, that it is no wonder the difference is overlooked in a calculation so great of itself, designed for wise ends to be expressed in so mysterious a way, and in so large numbers, as those signified by prophetic years; it follows, that the explication given of the three times and a half may be proved by a kind of reasoning, which, in many other cases, is convincing, namely, that the key which in fact deciphers a dark writing, is the true one.

If it be objected, that though ver. 11, gives some account of the beginning of the 1290 days, it does not particularise the end of them; it is sufficient to answer, that that and the subsequent calculation are parts of the answer to the general question, ver. 6, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" which shews, that the three numbers mentioned, viz. three and an half prophetic years, with 1290, and 1330 prophetic days mentioned ver. 11, 12, are calculated from the setting up of the desolating abomination to the end of the three *particular prophetic wonders*, namely, the end of the desolating horn and the end of the disperson of the holy people,* all which *particular* wonders are necessarily presupposed in that *more general* and comprehensive one, the *universal conversion* of the nations. And though it is not determined whether these three numbers respect the end of the three particular wonders, the little inequalities bewixt them may be accounted for by the distances betwixt the beginnings, the most remarkable intermediate

* See verse 7, and also verse 1.

steps, and the full accomplishment of extraordinary revolutions.

In distinguishing what appears yet more obscure from what is certain and evident in the calculations in view, it is proper to observe, that though the precise beginning of them is obscure, yet it is evident as to the extent of them, that it includes not merely 1200 or 1300 natural days, but so many prophetic days or years.

The cause of obscurity, as to the beginning of the calculations, is, that though the characters determining it, namely, *setting up* the desolating abomination, and *giving the power* of changing laws into the hands of the little horn, are characters not applicable to very many events; yet they do not appear so *absolutely singular*, and peculiar to *one*, but they may some way be applied to *several* events; which makes it difficult to fix on that precise step of the horn's gradual rise to which these characters may be chiefly, and most strictly, applied. This resembles the obscurity formerly observed in the calculation, Dan. ix. where the character fixing its beginning, (viz. the edict for restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem,) appearing applicable to three or four, though not to many events, it would have been more difficult to determine what edict is meant, were it not for a concomitant character, restricting the prediction to the edict that should be granted about seven weeks before the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls and streets should be finished.*

* It might perhaps deserve the pains of men best skilled in history to enquire, whether Dan. viii. 14, does not afford some such admiricular character for finding out the beginning of the calculations in chapters vii and xii; because these different passages compared together, seem to place about ten centuries betwixt some singular desolation, or other extraordinary event in the east, to which some of the words, Dan. viii. 13, may be applicable, and chief step of the little horn's rise in the west.

That the calculations in view, whatever obscurity appears as to the precise beginning of them, extend not only to 1200 or 1300 natural days, but to so many prophetic days, is so evident from what has been proved already, that it might seem superfluous to insist on farther proof of it, were it not that many of the Church of Rome maintain the contrary; supposing that the opposition to truth foretold in this and other parallel prophecies, though continuing to the time of the end, would only be of three common years and a half's standing; or would appear, or come to its height, only that little space of time before its fall; which would make it one of the most short-lived and most transient oppositions to the Messiah's kingdom, or obstacles to true religion, that ever happened.

This opinion is not only unsuitable to the prophetic style, according to which days stand for years, (as was proved from Dan. ix,) and horns, not merely for individual persons, but successions; but also to the extent and manifest scope of the several parallel predictions in Daniel, and particularly to the chief parts of the description given of the little horn.

The prophecies in this book of Daniel which treat of any of the four great monarchies, extend from the first, or at least from the second of them, not only to the times of the division of the fourth of them, but to the time of *the end*, or of the *universal* kingdom of the Messiah: and though what is yet future of that long duration is not known, yet what is past amounts to about twenty-two or twenty-three centuries. The chief scope of these extensive prophecies is, to describe the opposition made by the *most remarkable* adversaries to the Messiah's kingdom, and his final victory over them. It is to these subjects the predictions hasten forward, mentioning the

greatest temporal empires only in a transient way; and it is on these subjects they chiefly insist.* It is therefore unsuitable to the *extent*, and to the *chief scope* of these predictions, to suppose, that they should pass by all the opposition made to the Messiah's kingdom for so *many centuries*, and insist only on an opposition that was to continue but for a very *few years*. From the best rules of interpretation, we may reasonably infer, that in prophecies intended to describe the chief opposition to the truth, after the division of the fourth empire, to *the end*, it must be the opposition of the most considerable duration, as well as extent, that must be described; at least that it must not be one of the shortest, and consequently of the most inconsiderable.

Almost every part of the prophetic description of the horn, affords arguments against the opinion that supposes its continuance to be so inconsiderable as three and a half common years. Though he is said to rise *after* the other ten horns, yet if he were not to rise till about twelve or thirteen centuries *after* them, he could not be so well said to rise *among* them: nor is it said of the little western horn, chap. vii, that he would rise in the *latter times* of the ten western kingdoms, as it is said of the wonderful destroyer, chap. viii, that he would rise in the *latter times* of the four eastern kingdoms there mentioned.

If, besides this, we consider the work ascribed to this horn, warring with the saints, and prevailing against them *until* the time of the end, thinking to *wear them out*, changing times and laws, with what was formerly proved about the nature and extent of his authority, and the manner in which it behoved to be acquired, by one

* This is meant chiefly of chap. ii. 7, 8.

little horn over so many greater ones; the uncommon solemnity of the description of his fall, chap. vii, and of the oath concerning the time of his continuance, chap. xii. 7; the general scope of the long description given of his power, implying, that it would not be so short-lived an obstacle, but one of the most considerable obstacles to the universality of the divine kingdom; the peculiar manner in which what relates to him in the vision, chap. vii, awakens the prophet's attention, ver. 11 and 20, and excites his inquiry after interpretation: all these things afford considerable argument against the supposition in view; which would make that horn less considerable as to duration, than perhaps any other adversary of Messiah's kingdom, that makes a figure either in prophecy or history; especially when we consider, that the prophecies in Daniel, extending from the time of the most ancient empires to the time of the end, either pass over, or at least do not mention so expressly the opposition made by heathen Rome during the first three centuries of Christianity; not to insist, that the defenders of the present spiritual authority of Rome must in reason own that, according to their scheme, the opposition made to that power by so many nations for more than two hundred years last past, is a thing probably far more considerable than any struggle that shall continue less than the fiftieth part of that time.

If all these reasons could be supposed insufficient to decide the question, Whether the calculations in view are to be understood of natural or of prophetic years? the event gives a clear decision; and it is proved elsewhere, how reasonable it is to explain prophecy, as well as history, by the events to which they have a singular and peculiar conformity.

IV. A summary view of several of the chief distin-

guishing characters of the little horn so much insisted on, will pave the way for some useful remarks on the properties of the evidence resulting from Daniel's prediction on that extraordinary seducing power. Some of the chief characters are those that relate to the following heads: 1. The place and time of his appearance and reign. 2. The nature and extent of his power. 3. The means of acquiring and maintaining it. 4. His opposition to true religion. 5. His duration, and the period of it, viz. the time of the end.

1. Concerning the first of these, it is foretold, that his seat would be in the fourth or Roman empire,* and in the western part of it; for when the body of the fourth empire is said to be slain, it is expressly distinguished from the body of the three preceding universal empires, and consequently from that of the Grecian. As to the time of his appearance and reign, it is said, that it should be about the time of the downfall and division of the Roman empire, but somewhat posterior to that revolution, seeing he is both said to rise *among*, and *after*, the ten principal kingdoms, whose recovering their sovereignties occasioned that grand event. This is a character of the time of his rise, that throws a great deal of light on the prophetic descriptions of him, seeing it relates to so great and extraordinary an event as the downfall of such an empire, than which perhaps few things appear more striking in the history of revolutions relating to the mere temporal interests of mankind. But there is another character that relates to another very great revolution as to interests of a higher kind, the conversion of that empire from heathenism to Christianity, which Daniel's prediction seems plainly to intimate

* See Newton on chap. viii.

would precede the rise of a seducing power, whose crime is represented to consist very much in promoting an extensive and durable apostasy, by a change, a very great change to the worse, of laws relating to religion, as was observed in the above remarks on Dan. vii. 25.

2. As to the nature and extent of his power, it has been proved, that though it would be but little as to mere temporalities, yet his authority as to religious matters, or what is called spiritual power, would extend to the body of the divided western empire, so as to be indeed the chief source of all the opposition to truth that they should be involved in.

3. The means of acquiring and maintaining such authority has been proved to be, not by coercive force or conquest of the ten kingdoms, but by policy, bringing them voluntarily to *give their power* to him; see Rev. xvii.

4. His crime is, that he was to be the ringleader in apostasy, persecution, and other opposition to the truth, by such a change of laws relating to religion as above mentioned.

5. His duration extends through a considerable number of centuries, down towards the universal establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah.

These characters, especially when taken complexly, make up a circumstantial description that has the general properties formerly mentioned as sufficient to evidence divine foresight in the prediction to which they agree, and sufficient to determine their meaning. They can be proved, according to the most uncontested rules of interpretation, to agree really and peculiarly to the seducing Romish power, which through so many ages governed, in religious matters, the divided western empire, and governs a very great part of it still; and the

things foretold and fulfilled are beyond the reach of human sagacity and of chance.

V. To obviate objections from the things that seem most obscure in the predictions in view, it is proper to observe the following things.

1. When there are expressions in any writing, which, taken separately, are obscure; if these very expressions are explained and interpreted in that very writing itself, so as to determine their scope and meaning, such interpretation may be said to remove the obscurity, and to render the complex writing plain, clear, and convincing, to the impartial and attentive inquirer.

2. Though an interpretation should leave some parts obscure, it is very consistent with this, that other parts may be made so clear as to determine, in a very convincing manner, what event, or series of events, the complex prophetic description relates to. Unless this is allowed, it will follow, that if any part of a book is obscure, no part of it can be plain and clear; and that if in any historical description, suppose of any or of all the universal monarchies, some parts are dark, the clearest parts cannot determine which of the monarchies the complex description is meant of. If it would be absurd to argue on such a principle in other cases, it must be very unreasonable partiality to found objections on it in the present case.

VI. Let me now apply these remarks to the subject of the present inquiry.

1. It is of particular importance to observe as to several predictions on the subject in view, (such as Daniel chap ii. vii. and viii, and Rev. xvii.), that they evidently consist of two distinct parts; vision, and subsequent interpretation; the latter of which is intended to remove, at least in a great measure, the obscurity that otherwise

would be in the former; which is done in a particular manner by explaining prophetic figures and emblems Thus the great beasts in the visions are interpreted to signify great kingdoms, or, in the limited but usual sense of the word, universal empires, as in the prophetic style they are expressly said to subdue and rule all nations. Different horns belonging to such beasts are interpreted to be different lesser kingdoms of which those great empires have consisted, or into which at their downfall they have been divided. It is made exceedingly evident in the predictions themselves, that any number, either of beasts or of horns, does not represent merely so many individual sovereign rulers, but so many different sorts or successions of such rulers; as is evident from what is said of the four horns of the third or Greek empire, and the ten belonging to the fourth or Roman empire; which last are represented as continuing to the time of the universal spreading of the Messiah's kingdom. Even as to that one horn of the third or Greek empire, which is called a great and notable horn between the beast's eyes, and interpreted to be the first king, (Dan. viii. 5 and 21,) an illustrious interpreter* justly observes, that it represents, not one individual, but a succession of three sovereigns, preceding the division of that empire; namely, Alexander, and his son, and brother. And whereas what is represented in Dan. viii, by four horns belonging to that empire, is represented in chap. vii by four heads, this shews, that that emblem likewise is not restricted to so many individuals. but may represent so many successions, or so many sorts of sovereigns. Not only the names of beasts, and of heads or horns belonging to them, but also the names of

* Newton.

kings, are taken for different kinds of rulers, or different successions. Thus Dan. vii. 17, the four beasts are called *four kings;* and ver. 24, the ten horns, *ten kings;* and chap. viii. 21, after that it is said, that *the rough goat is the king of Grecia,* the king in the singular number; the very next words shew, that it is not an individual but a succession that is meant; for it is added, *the great horn—is the first king.* The things in the vision in the 2d chapter, relating to the feet and toes of the image, are interpreted in the plainest expressions, that the fourth kingdom should be divided, chap. ii. 21. There would be no small obscurity in one of the expressions, relating to the duration of the eleventh horn, or the most remarkable horn of the fourth beast, viz. *time, times, and an half,* if no interpretation of such words were contained in other scriptures treating of the same subject; but it is amazing in how many places, mutually throwing light on one another, interpretations of these words are contained; as has been evident in part already, (but will be more so hereafter); besides that there is a plain character given of the duration of that seducing power, as reaching from the downfall and division of the fourth or Roman empire down towards the times of the universal establishment of Christ's kingdom.

As in books that treat of the most demonstrative sciences, or sciences that admit of the greatest certainty, there are peculiar terms of art that must seem obscure to a learner, till that obscurity is removed by definitions; and in such cases it would be absurd to make the obscurity that needed to be thus removed an objection against the certainty or clearness of subsequent proofs and demonstrations: so, in the present case, seeing emblems and symbols that would be otherwise of themselves obscure, are so expressly defined, and that in such

a variety of passages relating to the same subject, such emblems do not hinder reasonings and proofs relating to the meaning of the predictions from being clear and convincing.

One thing in the explications of emblems seems to deserve very particular attention; it is, that the interpretations annexed to the prophetic visions, not only determine the different beasts to represent different great empires, but they shew, in the plainest terms and in the most express manner, that the first represents the Babylonian empire, and the second and third the empires of the Medes and Persians, and of the Grecians: —which is one important instance how much the evidence in the 7th chapter is strengthened by the predictions in the 2d and the 8th, Dan. ii. 38, viii. 20, 21. When second and third emblems are so clearly declared to represent the Medo-Persian and Greek empires, it was in a manner superfluous to add, that the fourth represents the Roman, this being so evidently implied.

2. Besides the explications of emblems, various other things shew, that the obscurity in the predictions in view is far from being such as some apprehend. How many expressions are there, that must be understood in the most literal meaning, and so need no definition or explication! How clearly is it told, that the fourth empire should be *divided*, and that the chief events pointed at should happen after that division, as the stone was to fill the earth after smiting the image upon his feet! How clearly is it told, and how strongly inculcated, not only that the fourth kingdom should be *diverse* from the rest, but also that the eleventh horn should be diverse from the other horns! Dan. ii. 41, 34, 35, chap. vii. 7, 23, 24. There is the like clearness in the expressions about the crimes charged on that horn, and on the rest

as inexcusably involving themselves in his guilt, and complying with his purposes.

3. It adds a great deal to the strength of the evidence in view, that the same subject, the same series of characters and events, is so oft repeated in various lights, and so much inculcated in various parallel predictions, reciprocally illustrating and confirming one another, with a harmony like that of the four evangelists, coinciding in so many things, as shew, that they all treat of the same subject in the main; while the additional peculiarities of each contribute to make the complex description to be gathered from the whole the more particular, full, and circumstantial, and consequently the proof of the true meaning the more convincing. It is a very observable instance that we have of this harmony, in the different views given of the constituent parts of the third and fourth empires, in their divided state, by four wings, heads, and horns, belonging to the third, and ten toes, and as many horns, belonging to the fourth.

4. But as it is agreeable to the rules of just reasoning in other cases, to make use of facts and events otherwise known, as a key to the more obscure parts of historical descriptions, to which prophetic ones have so obvious and manifest affinity, it will further confirm the greatness of the evidence in the predictions under consideration, if we attend to some principal properties of the subject, and events they treat of. These are so far from being either inconsiderable in their own nature, or uncertain and obscure, like many traditions handed down from the fabulous ages, as they are called, by records of that character, that they are among the most important and uncontested facts, facts of the greatest notoriety, in the history of the world. All this may be justly affirmed of such things as the four great monarchies, which

no fifth one has yet, in all respects, equalled; the downfall and division of the two last of them; and particularly the chief grand revolutions of the last itself, its conversion, its division into so many parts in the west, the subsequent reunion of those parts, not indeed under one temporal head, but under a head which, in the prophetic style, is, with the utmost propriety, said to be diverse from all others; the nature of whose power, joined with its extent, the means of acquiring and supporting it, and its amazing effects, have something in them so diverse from other powers, so marvellous, so hard to be accounted for, and unparalleled, that the possibility of its existence would perhaps be disputed by some, if experience left any room for it; notwithstanding all which things, which might seem to render it probable, that what was so marvellous and ill-founded could not be very durable, its past duration so far exceeds that of other great monarchies, that it exceeds one-fifth of the time since the creation, and one-fourth of the time since Noah.

Such peculiarities seem to discover footsteps of supreme wisdom in the structure of prophetic descriptions, of the most comprehensive kind, taking in so large a compass as to extend from the ancient ages of the greatest empires called universal, to the last days, when that of the Messiah would be really so, in the highest and strictest sense.

5. In so comprehensive a structure, it would perhaps have been expected by many, that a larger proportion of prophetic description should have been bestowed on so considerable subjects as the more ancient secular powers of the world. But instead of this, as was hinted above, both the prophetic visions and interpretations, after a transient view of those other powers, seem to hasten forwards to that grand spiritual seducing power

in the divided western empire. When any critics object against some Protestant interpreters, what they might with equal reason object perhaps to primitive Christians, that too great a proportion of prophecy is applied by them to one antichrist, or one opposer of truth, while other powers, in more eastern parts, chargeable with such opposition, though in a different way, have been, and are still, so very considerable; in making such objections, men do not sufficiently advert to the guilt of prescribing to the Spirit of prophecy; and what affinity it would have to such arrogance, if people pretended to interpret scripture predictions, not by comparing the characters contained in them with the events to which they agree, but by taking upon them to determine what proportions of predictions about opposers of the truth might most fitly be allotted to different powers liable to that charge. But besides this, the properties that have been mentioned as agreeing to the seducing power that is actually most enlarged and insisted on, show how exceedingly fit and suitable it is that it should be so.

VII. Though several of the above reasonings not only show, that the prophecies under consideration agree *really* to the power to which they are applied, but that they agree to it so *peculiarly* as to be applicable to no other, it is proper to urge this last point more directly and fully; because it is a chief objection against the force of arguments from prophecies, that it is pretended the characters in them are too *indefinite* and *general;* so that, supposing them to agree to one thing contended for, this does not hinder their being equally applicable to other things, being quite different from it; and because it so happens, that numbers of the friends of the Papal power seem willingly to own, that Rome is the seat of the grand adversary of truth described in the chief

prophecies both of Daniel and John; while one party pleads it must be one of the predecessors of the present Romish sovereign, viz. the Heathen emperor; and others that it is a successor of his, who is to appear near the end of the world. Each of them brings so invincible arguments against the opposite side, as to make it out between them, that the predictions are applicable to no Romish power before the present one, and to none that can come after him.

Whereas all that were before are reducible to two sorts, namely, heathen and Christian sovereigns; it is sufficient, for obvious reasons, to show, that the above five characters of the little horn, Dan. vii, are not applicable to the former of them, as on all hands it is agreed they are not to the latter. There is not one of these characters but affords demonstration, that it is not heathen Rome that is meant: neither the time of that horn's rise, nor the nature of his power, nor the means of acquiring it, nor the amazing use made of it, nor its duration, can at all agree to the pagan emperors. 1. Instead of rising when the empire was divided, the pagan emperors, and pagan supreme powers, in Rome, in general were gone long before that time. 2. Instead of being a little horn, Dan. vii, as to secular power, and great in power of a *diverse* kind, they were a great horn in the first of these respects, meddling little with the other among other nations, except in submitting to, and adopting too often, the idols of the nations they conquered. 3. As to the means of their power, instead of its flowing from a voluntary surrender of power on the part of other nations, Dan. ii and vii, prophecy and history agree it was to flow from their subduing, devouring, and breaking in pieces. 4. As to the crimes charged on the little horn, though persecuting of the saints of the Most High, and

speaking great words against himself, were chargeable on too many of them; yet it is otherwise as to two comprehensive enormities charged on the horn: one is, that of being the source of false religion to so many other kingdoms, these being rather the sources of idolatry to heathen Rome; another is, that of apostasy from the laws of the true religion, and the guilt of changing them, these laws having never been established in their empire till they were gone. 5. As to their duration, instead of continuing till the ages of the universal establishment of truth, it is above fourteen centuries since they are gone, and that great revolution has not yet taken place.

Though this is a good argument against applying the predictions to the heathen sovereigns, it does not follow that it is a just objection against applying them to their present successors; as is evident from the observations made formerly about those parts of prophecies that are yet unfulfilled, showing, that they afford no valid objection against well-founded interpretations of those parts that are fulfilled. The character of duration to the time called the *time of the end*, above explained, cannot possibly agree to the pagan powers of Rome. None can shew, that it cannot possibly agree to the Papal power. In the very nature of the thing, the downfall of that power must tend to the happy revolution by which the time of *the end* is characterised; that power being a very great and principal obstacle to that revolution. As to the other character of the little horn's duration, more darkly expressed in Daniel vii, the light thrown on it, partly already, and more fully afterwards, from parallel and more clear passages, shows a duration much exceeding, not only that of the pagan emperors, but that of all the pagan powers of Rome before them, from the time that Rome could be reckoned a great kingdom, or great

commonwealth; yea, the whole time from the beginning of what the prophecies call *the third great empire*, to the downfall of paganism in the fourth, makes perhaps but about one half of the number of the centuries which Daniel's expressions imply.

As the characters of the little horn are not applicable to any predecessors of the present Romish powers, neither can they be applied to any future power that can be supposed to be their successors. There is a decisive proof of this in the first of the above-explained distinguishing characters, taken from the time of the rise of that power, viz. that it was to be about the time of the division of the empire into so many parts, having sovereigns of their own. Though the little horn is said to rise *after* these, he is also said to rise *among* them. How could he be said to rise among them, if he was not to appear till above twelve centuries after them? That space exceeds what intervened betwixt the days of Daniel and of the first of the empires that he speaks of, and the downfall and division of the fourth and last of them. When the third or Greek empire is represented as having four horns belonging to it, this is meant of four powers that appeared *immediately* after the division of that empire. How can it be imagined, that the ten horns of the fourth empire should be meant of powers that were not to exist until above twelve centuries after that empire's division and downfall?

People that indulge imagination may pretend, that though all the other characters of the little horn, different from the time of its rise, should be allowed to agree to the Papal power; and to that power peculiarly, so far as not to be applicable to any other that has existed already; yet it is not absolutely impossible but another future power may appear to which these characters may

agree. Though it would be improper to insist on prolix answers to an objection of this kind, it may not be amiss to make the following brief remarks on it. 1st, The character, from the circumstance of time, is of itself clear and decisive, which may be more fully confirmed afterwards. 2dly, People may apply abstract reasonings of this kind, relating to simple possibilities, to any other uncontested history, or historical description, as justly in the main as to this subject. For instance, they may do so as to the most undoubted histories of the founders of any of the great monarchies. How will they be able to find any events, or any achievements, in any of these histories, of which it can be demonstrated, that it is absolutely impossible that they should happen again, in some future period, in the same parts of the world.

It would have very extraordinary consequences, if men should lay down such a general principle as this, That historical descriptions must be reckoned too indefinite to have a determinate meaning, or to be meant of any particular facts, or series of facts, and to proceed from true information of them, though they have a true, real, and evident conformity to past facts, if it is not *simply impossible* that the like facts may be repeated in some future ages.

Such a principle must put an end to all historical certainty, so far that it may be inferred from it, that the histories hitherto most uncontested may not have proceeded from any information, but may have been the fruits of invention, forged at random before the events happened, and then verified and fulfilled by chance; and that not only once, but often.

If it be evidently absurd to lay stress on principles and reasonings leading to such consequences in any other

cases, to lay stress on them in the present must be the most unreasonable partiality.

To shorten the reasoning on this head, it is proper to refer to the remarks made above in the introduction, about the things that made up a singular or peculiar description of any event, or complication of events. The more circumstantial a description is as to time and place, and the more singular and extraordinary the things described are, the more evident it must be, that the description is not too indefinite and undetermined, but that it is really meant of the things to which it is known to be peculiarly applicable, exclusively of any other past events; in which case, mere abstract reasonings, about simple possibility, as to events that may be yet to come, cannot be regarded, without leading men to the consequences above hinted at.

Though the description of the little horn in Daniel takes in a great compass, as to time and place, this does not hinder the description from being *sufficiently circumstantial*, but renders it the more singular and extraordinary, that a power and authority of so unusual and astonishing a kind should have both so great extent and duration. Both these are plainly circumscribed within the bounds of the divided western empire, and the time intervening between that division and the most extensive spreading of the Messiah's kingdom In the nature of the thing, as was formerly hinted, the downfall of so great and extensive opposition, must not only have some tendency to that happy revolution, but must indeed be one principal part of it, of various important subserviency to the other parts of it; which shews with what propriety prophetic descriptions connect these things together.

As the description, with regard to time and place, is

sufficiently circumstantial to refute the imputation of being indefinite and undetermined; so the things described are of so eminently distinguishing and singular a nature, that the power described is, to use Daniel's expressions, more *diverse* from all others, more unlike and dissimilar, by much, than any of the mere secular monarchies that ever appeared have been to one another. And this important disparity, which sets the description so far above the unjust charge of being too indefinite or indeterminate, extends to all the primary characters so fully insisted on above, such as the vastly unequal extent of the different kinds of complex authority and jurisdiction, namely, the secular and the spiritual; the nature of the claim made, (viz. as to changing the laws of religion), and the amazing submission to it; the means of acquiring and maintaining so singular power; and its amazing effects and duration.

Whereas oft-times, in other cases, reasonings that are really convincing, may, notwithstanding, require prolix and *laborious deductions,* which is often the case in the most demonstrative sciences, where the proof of a conclusion, somewhat remote from the first principles and elements, must presuppose a great number of antecedent proofs; it may be inferred from what has been said, that the necessary deductions, in the present case, instead of being very laborious, are very capable of being made *simple, obvious,* and *easy,* at least in comparison of many others, provided an impartial inquirer vouchsafe moderate attention. The prophetic emblems are few in number; and they are interpreted in the prophecies themselves. The facts needful to make a singular description, and needful to be compared with the predictions, are also few in number, and are at once of the most

extraordinary nature, and of the most public uncontested notoriety.

By these means, the following small number of characters, to be gathered by plain and easy reasoning from a few passages in one prophet (Daniel), make up a singular description, not applicable to any power that ever was, or will be, but one: "A seducing power that was to arise after the conversion, the downfall, and division of the Roman empire, established in the western parts of that empire, when divided into so many sovereignties; little in comparison of these others as to secular authority, but claiming and obtaining an universal spiritual authority over the body of the western kingdoms; acquiring and maintaining this through policy and craft, (these are words in Daniel), procuring a voluntary surrender of power from really superior sovereigns; improving it so as to be the ringleader to those others in apostasy, persecution, and various opposition to the truth; and continuing to exert such power for such ends during a considerable number of ages."

It is no just objection against what is said about the shortness and easiness of the reasonings that can make up a convincing proof, that this subject is so oft treated in a prolix manner: it is the effect of the strength of the evidence which the predictions afford, that the various branches of the reasonings, founded on them, admit of so many useful confirmations; none of which should be overlooked, considering the importance of the subject, and the prejudices of many against it.

Sect. V. *Of the Book of Revelation.*

Though it is the chief design of this essay, to treat of the Old-Testament prophecies, it is on various accounts,

proper not to leave the subject last insisted on, without taking some view of New Testament prophecies relative to it, as these two sorts of predictions reciprocally illustrate each other, so as to render the complex evidence resulting from them much more striking.

1. In New Testament prophecies on this subject, it seems very observable, that it is mentioned as a subject, which it was of importance to Christians even of the first age to be acquainted with; and about which they were accordingly carefully instructed, notwithstanding the distance of the event predicted. When the Apostle Paul speaks to the Thessalonians of a singular future apostacy, while he plainly supposes it to be at a considerable distance, seeing its being yet to come is the very argument by which he refutes the mistake of those who thought the day of Christ was at hand; he expressly reminds them, that this was a subject about which he had taken care to instruct them when among them, 2 Thess. ii. 5. "Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" And when the Apostle John says, in his general epistle, the direction of which is not restricted to any particular church or person, "Ye have heard that Antichrist shall come," 1 John ii. 18, it seems plainly to imply, that the body of Christians in general, even in that age, were instructed about that important subject of prophecy: and it is observable, that whereas the name *Antichrist*, in its literal and general meaning, signifies an opposer of Christ, the opposition treated of in the context, is what was made not by the most avowed adversaries, but by those who were, or had been, professed members of the church, but had become ringleaders in apostasy and seduction; which may very naturally lead back an attentive inquirer's thoughts to the passage last cited from Paul,

plainly pointing out an extraordinary falling away, or apostacy, in which the ringleader would be the man of sin, sitting in the temple or professing church of God. And when to these things we add, that the book of Revelation, in the very introduction, commends the blessedness of reading the prophecy it contains: which can be proved to treat more abundantly of the subject in view than of any other; all these things put together shew, that what was justly reckoned so interesting before the events predicted happened, ought to appear much more so, after all seems fulfilled, except the blessed complete triumph of truth over so extensive and lasting opposition, and the changes most immediately subservient to that triumph.

It shews a very surprising conformity and coincidence in the predictions of Daniel and John, that the 17th chapter of the book of Revelation annexes to a prophetic vision a particular interpretation, of astonishing clearness, rendering it a fit key to more obscure passages; and the whole taken together shews, that both these prophets give a singular and circumstantial description of the same seducing power, consisting of the same primary distinguishing characters, so much insisted on already as set forth in Daniel, relating to the *place* and *time* of that power's reign, its complex nature and extent, the means of its establishment, its amazing effects and duration; with this advantageous disparity, which it was reasonable to expect, that the prediction of the latest date, while it fully agrees with the former so far as it goes, superadds considerable new light, rendering the description more full and more particular.

II. As to the first complex character, relating to the circumstances of place and time, which circumstances need to be joined to form a distinguishing description,

but must be viewed apart in reasoning on them; whereas Daniel is so far particular, as to place the seat of the seducing power he describes, not only to the Roman empire, but to the western part of it, John adds further light, by placing it very clearly in the metropolis; "the city built on seven hills, that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth," Rev. xvii. 9, 18.

Instead of striving to evade this evidence, they who might be thought most interested to do so, at least very many of them, being desirous to have it believed, that Peter was at Rome, urge it as one of their chief arguments, such as it is, for that opinion, that that Apostle writes his first epistle from Babylon.

If it be said, that the character of the situation on seven hills, is common to the western with the eastern metropolis of the empire; in answer to this, it is sufficient to observe the following things. 1. That the western seems to have been by far more famous for that property as to its situation. 2. That it appears even from Daniel, as was proved above, that the beast with ten horns, which is the emblem in John as well as Daniel, represents, not the eastern but the western empire. 3. That the well-known eastern powers that have appeared, the Greek and Turkish empires, are powers to which the other characters in the prophetic descriptions above considered, and which are the same both in Daniel and John, can by no means be applied, not indeed so much as to any one of them. 4. Whereas there are at least three distinct characters given of the place described; its situation on so many hills; its having in different ages so many different kinds of government, (of which afterwards,) some of them before the Apostle's time and some after; and, lastly, its being in his time the city that ruled the kings of the earth; the first is a very distinguish-

ing and very notour character of Rome, whether, in the strictest sense, absolutely peculiar or not; the second and third distinguish it from the eastern imperial city; and the third is, in the strictest sense, absolutely singular. If it be said, that the word which seems to make it so, by a small deviation from the most natural obvious meaning, may denote the city, which, though it did not rule the earth in John's time, would do so in future times; it is a sufficient answer, that it is an evident rule of interpretation, that the most natural and usual meaning of words is to be reckoned the true meaning, unless there is some convincing reason for deviation from it; which is not the case here; and that seeing the expressions in view, which belong not to the vision, but to the interpretation, are in the present tense, in their most natural meaning, they must denote the city that was then or at that present time imperial. And if it is yielded, or proved, that the descriptions in view agree to that to which they are applied, according to the most natural meaning of words, and according to rules of interpretation acknowledged in other cases, the great point is gained: and it will not be needful to enquire into the consequences of forced meanings, forced without any reason, which, though yielded to in this particular, would be far from supporting the cause proposed to be served by them, considering the evidence of the other parts of the prophetic description for overthrowing it, and the notoriety of the third remark in this paragraph.

But though there were no more to prove, that it is not a future, but a present imperial city that is described, present, and existing when the Apostle wrote, there is a sufficiently decisive proof of it in ver. 10; which, speaking so clearly of different kinds of governments of that city, distinguishes them into past, present, and

future; and expressly says, "five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come," etc. So that no city that was not at that time imperial can be the city there meant; no city, of which it could not be said, consistently with truth, in the Apostle's days, that several of its heads or governments are fallen, and *one is.*

Though it is not sufficient for determining the meaning of the predictions about mystical Babylon, to prove that the place meant must be Rome; yet it might be expected, that even this itself should make the adherents of the Romish church much more inquisitive than they seem to be into the contents of these predictions, were it but in search of some hint, amidst such a series of prophecies relating to that place, of its extraordinary and singular prerogatives, on which their religious profession is founded, such as infallibility, and the important things connected with it: and when those who make the trial, instead of this, find on the one hand a profound silence on these heads, and on the other hand a series of the most astonishing descriptions of enormities, with suitable warnings and denunciations of judgments, is there not reason to apply to many people's inattention to the scope of the predictions what the Apostle applies to the object of it, when he tells, that it made him "wonder with great admiration?" Rev. xvii. 6.

III. After viewing the characters of the place, if we view next those of the time of the rise and reign of the seducing power described, it will appear, that they are neither applicable to the Pagan emperors, the only predecessors of the present Romish power that can be so much as suspected with the least colour to be pointed at, nor to any that can be supposed to be the successors of that power.

1. As it was proved formerly, that Daniel character-

ises the time from the downfall of the empire, by its division into ten kingdoms, recovering their sovereignty by shaking off the Roman yoke; so John characterises it by telling very clearly, that the ten horns of the beast "are ten kings, which had received no kingdom as yet; but would receive power one hour with the beast," Rev. xvii. 12; adding, that "these would have one mind, and give their power and strength unto the beast," ver. 13: and it is upon the matter repeated again, ver. 17, that they would "agree to give their kingdom unto the beast."

Though characterising the time, and characterising the means of acquiring the power and authority described, are both plainly in the words cited, and both demonstrations that it is not the heathen empire that is meant, the means of power belong to the third character, to be considered afterwards; and as to the time, it is of sufficient notoriety, that the empire ceased to be heathen, and turned professedly Christian, before it was divided.

2. Whereas in Daniel's time the pagan, as well as the present Papal Romish powers, were yet to come; in John's time the former of these were the powers actually existing: whence it follows, that if the great seducer described by him in chap. xvii, and parallel places, is evidently described as one yet to come, it must not be the pagan emperor that is meant. Now in ver. 8, it is very plainly declared, that the beast he described was to *ascend* in future times; evidently implying, that he had not ascended or risen in John's time: and to say otherwise, by applying the description to the pagan emperor, is to contradict the Apostle in a very direct manner.

3. John's description plainly asserts, that the pagan emperor is to be accounted the sixth idolatrous, as well

as the sixth supreme secular head of Rome; that the seventh secular head would not be of the number of the idolatrous heads; which is notour from history to be the case as to the Christian sovereigns; and that the seducer, who is the grand subject of the prediction, would be the eighth secular, and the seventh idolatrous head.

The proof of this, requires only moderate attention to a very few principles or grounds of argument, partly expressed in the prediction, partly evident from uncontested history. 1. John makes idolatry (false religion) an essential characteristic of the beast, and of his seven heads, as appears from chap. xvii. 3, and from ver. 1 of chap. xiii, which chapter is very evidently parallel to the 17th. 2. Hence it necessarily follows, that at any period of time when the empire was not idolatrous, the beast did not then exist; but it might then be said, that it *was, but is not,* (which explains ver. 8 and 11; because a beast full of names of blasphemy, and having heads of that character, is an emblem, not simply of the Roman empire, but of that empire while idolatrous, etc. 3. When it is declared, that of the whole seven blasphemous heads five were fallen, and that one existed in John's time, ver. 10 to 13, it is evidently the same thing as if it were said, that the heathen emperor then existing was the sixth head. 4. When it is said, that after this sixth head, who was blasphemous, another would come who should continue for a short space, (how far this from being applicable to the Papal power!) it is immediately added, that the beast that is the subject of the prediction is the eighth, and is of the seven. There is a plain key to these expressions in what is just now observed as to two essential ingredients in the characters of *the beast*, and *heads* of the beast, declared in the prediction itself to be essential. The first is sove-

reign power, which in common style is implied in the name and notion of *heads* of empires; as, in the prophetic style, beasts are emblems, both of empires themselves, and of the heads or sovereigns that act by them, both amounting to the same thing in historical and prophetic descriptions, the actions of the one being so frequently considered as the actions of the other: which explains the propriety in the prophetic style, in calling the beast that was yet to rise or ascend the seventh head; and in speaking of giving power to the beast, and of submitting to the seducing power that sat on him, or ruled him, as equivalent.

The second essential character is blasphemy, implying enormous corruption in religion, as appears from the whole series of the prediction. As this character is evidently distinct from the former, viz. sovereign civil power, (which is God's ordinance), and separable from it, the passages cited prove that a succession of rulers having the first of those characters, in itself so lawful and honourable, without the other criminal one joined with it, may be counted among the heads of the empire, without being one of the heads of the beast. And even though such passages had not furnished such a key to the expressions in ver. 11, other parts of the prophecy, if duly compared with notour facts, which in all reason may and ought to be used as a key to historical, and consequently to prophetic descriptions, might reasonably suggest a solution of the difficulty in view, by shewing, that the same power which in one respect, namely, that of secular authority, was the eighth head, might in another respect with too great reason be counted as the seventh, because of too much resemblance and imitation of the first six: and such a manner of representing and expressing things has a peculiar suitableness to the

genius and scope of sacred predictions, concerning which a modern eminent author* justly observes, that when they treat of the civil affairs of empires, it is only, or chiefly, so far as the sacred interests of the kingdom of God are affected by them.

These remarks prove, that to make the heathen emperor the beast, or the head, that is, the chief subject of the prophecy, is directly to contradict the prophecy itself. It is to say, that what the prophecy makes the sixth head, is the eighth, and of the seven; and that what the prophecy makes the eighth is the sixth.

The conversion of the empire is necessarily implied when another head, not counted among the idolatrous ones, is evidently declared to intervene between the sixth head of that criminal character and the seventh, who as to sovereign power simply considered is the eighth.

Thus John has the two characters of time formerly observed in Daniel, characters relating to the time of the conversion of the empire, and of its division and downfall, with more abundant refutations of the opinion that would apply the predictions in view to the pagan emperor, though the refutations inferred from Daniel are convincing.

The remarks made furnish abundant proofs, that those predictions cannot be applied to any imaginable successors of the present Romish power, any more than to his predecessors. It cannot be said of any such power, that it was to rise about the time of the division of the empire; and that the ten kings who divided it among them should receive power one hour with that beast. It cannot be said of it, that it is the eighth sovereign, and the

* Newton.

seventh blasphemous head. If it exist, it must in these different respects, be the eighth and the ninth. Besides this, how can it be said, that the space intervening between the sixth head, and that new future head, is but a short space, ver. 10? how can that be applied to a space exceeding fourteen centuries at least, which far exceeds the duration of all the former heads put together?

IV. The second distinguishing character relates to the complex nature and the extent of power belonging to the seducer described, concerning which it was proved before, that while Daniel makes his power little as to secular things, he makes it at the same time very great as to matters of religion; extending to the whole ten horns, or the body of the fourth beast, or Roman empire. Though the Apostle John does not expressly call the power he describes in any respect little, yet as the same thing may be declared, with equal clearness, in different expressions, the comparative littleness of Rome's secular power is implied in various parts of John's description. It is necessarily implied, in the downfall of its ancient extensive secular empire, and its division into so many different kingdoms. It is implied, in its owing its most extensive authority of a peculiar kind, to a voluntary surrender and agreement on the part of those kingdoms These proofs are so clear and decisive, that it is the less needful to insist much on confirmations of the same conclusion from the difference between the emblems which represent the same Roman empire under its sixth head, in its pagan state, and those that represent it under its seventh idolatrous, and eighth secular head. Both represent it as an animal with seven heads and ten horns. In the 12th chapter, which treats of it in its pagan state, the emblem is a great red dragon; in the 13th, which treats of it in a subsequent idolatrous state, after the

downfall of the dragon, (or of paganism), the emblem is a leopard; which is the representation in Daniel of the third or Greek empire, that was so soon divided into different kingdoms. Though the equal number of heads and horns, besides other things in chap. xii, is an argument that the dragon and leopard are the same empire, there is an additional strong proof of this in chap. xiii. 2, which, speaking of the leopard, expressly says, that the dragon gave him his power, *and his seat;* which implies plainly, that the seat of the old pagan empire was to be that of the beast so much insisted on. In the emblem of the pagan empire, the crowns are only on the seven heads; in the other emblem they are on the ten horns, chap. xiii. 1. As crowned heads, in common style, denote sovereign powers; and horns, in the prophetic style denote rulers; crowned horns are no obscure emblem of the same thing with crowned heads; ten of these are represented as having the empire divided among them at the time that it has the above-mentioned essential characters of the beast; which makes it evident, that the secular power falling to the share of the ancient seat of empire itself must be very little, compared to what it was formerly.

But it is no less evident in the prediction, that its power in another respect, so oft mentioned already, was to be very great, so great as to extend to the whole ten horns. It is expressly declared, that the beast that was to rise or ascend was to be the eighth head, and *of the seven;* which shews, that the names of the beast, and of that head, are by John promiscuously used for the same thing. Seeing the ten horns are his horns, and he is the head over them, it cannot be justly reckoned an obscure deduction to infer, that however these horns are distinct and divided in respect of secular power, they must in some

other respect be united, and joined in common subjection under that head. But we are not left to gather this merely by such deductions, (which however have their use), seeing it is so directly and explicitly asserted, that the ten horns or kingdoms should be of one mind, giving their strength and power to the beast, and agreeing to do so, Rev. xvii. 13, 15 and 17; besides that the many waters on which the woman (explained to be the city on seven hills) is said to sit, are said to be "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues;" as in the parallel passage, chap. xiii. 3, it is said, "that all the world wondered after the beast."

As these things prove, that the authority of the beast, or of its seventh idolatrous head was to be of so great extent as above mentioned, but not as to secular matters, this itself is an argument for its being an authority and influence in religious matters, which are the chief subjects of sacred predictions, and sacred writing in general. But besides this, that distinguishing quality of this authority appears almost from the whole series of the descriptions in view; particularly from chap. xvii. 2 and 5, which, with other things of the like kind, will come more fully under consideration in treating of the fourth character, relating to the beast's crimes.

Little secular power, and extensive power and authority exercised over other kingdoms in religious matters, are characters evidently exclusive of the heathen empire, which was absolute and universal, in the limited prophetic meaning, in secular things, and meddled little in those of the religions of the conquered nations, except in the way of borrowing from them, rather than of dictating or imposing. If it be objected, that they meddled too much in trying to suppress the Christian religion, it is sufficient to observe, that that was not then the reli-

gion of the kings of the earth, who are represented in the prophecy as having *one mind*, in submitting in those matters to one head; which uniformity was so far from taking place during the reign of paganism, that though the religions of the heathen nations had one common general name, they were really very different religions; and their common name imports no more than the religion of the nations.

V. As to the third distinguishing character of the power described, relating to the means of acquiring and supporting such enormous authority; though this is a character really distinct from the second, which relates to the nature of the authority, and its extent; yet as was formerly hinted, the same passages in the prediction give a plain account of both, shewing, that the means of it would be, on the part of the kings and kingdoms, a voluntary surrender of power, they agreeing and being of one mind in that matter; and on the part of the head submitted to, deceiving and intoxicating, Rev. xvii. 2, 4, 13, &c. chap. xviii. 3. This may reasonably be considered as having a natural connection with the above character of small intrinsic secular power: which must make the acquisition of so enormous and absolute power in other respects the effect of methods very different from conquest; in all which the opposition to the most notour things in the character and history of the Old Pagan empire seems so obvious, that it is not needful to insist on it. Meantime it is not fit to overlook a remark that has been made on this strange surrender of what the kings of the earth have been always so jealous of, this surrender of power, so voluntary, so extensive, and durable, "That it is a thing of so singular a nature, that it has a particular fitness to show, how far the pre-

dicting of it must be beyond the reach of human sagacity and of chance."

VI. As to the fourth character, which relates to the crimes charged on the power described, particular attention seems due to the surprising conformity on this head, between the predictions of Daniel and John, and between both and the most notour facts in history, shewing, that this part of the complex description in view is exceeding far from being applicable to the Pagan Roman power, or any other such power, but what now exists.

It is of use to begin this head with answering objections; after observing, that if it is a character of truth and just reasoning, that impartial inquiry into objections suggests new confirmations of what is objected to, that maxim is eminently applicable to the present case. It is the chief objection against our finding distinguishing characters of any crimes of the present Romish powers, in the passages in view, that the crimes described in them have an obvious resemblance to those of the old Pagan empire; particularly blasphemy, spiritual whoredom, or idolatry, and persecution.

It is certain, that the fact cannot be denied, that there is an obvious and complex resemblance between the crimes of the beast and those of the ancient Paganism; but it is no less certain, that there is also such a resemblance between the crimes of ancient and modern Rome in matters of religion and religious worship in particular. Though it cannot be expected, that writers of that communion should own the resemblance, so far as it takes place, to be criminal, but that rather they should make it prudential; yet they cannot, with any show of reason, deny, that in external rites it is very extensive, after this has been so convincingly made out, not merely by their opposers, but by such a man of their own communion as

Polydore Virgil; besides the great facility with which others may, and do, perhaps without much learning, yet with sufficient evidence, run the parallel between the rites of ancient and modern Rome, from the most uncontested accounts of both.

This being the case, let us suppose the prophecies in view had told, in a direct and explicit manner, that after the six idolatrous sovereign powers of Rome, the Pagan emperors should be at an end; and after a seventh succession of sovereigns, but not idolatrous powers, had intervened for some time, an eighth sovereign, and seventh idolatrous power, of a new kind, should arise, who would establish and propagate an astonishing resemblance of the old superstitions through the divided kingdoms of the old empire; if all this were said in the most explicit manner, who could avoid owning it to be a surprisingly clear, a circumstantial, and historical kind of description of the Romish power that reigns now, and has done so for ages past?

But if it is not in the most explicit style, it is in a style more suitable to prediction, that all this is asserted in the passages in view, and that in such a way as requires no laborious or difficult deduction.

1. The head of Rome described is not described merely by the general criminal character of opposing the truth, which might really agree to a future new head of that city and empire, without any considerable *resemblance* to the old ones, but that resemblance itself seems a chief thing in the prophetic description; and when he is called one of the seven, is it not the most natural comment that he would bear too great a resemblance to the first six, by reviving and procuring extensive regard to an image of the old superstitions through the empire, after that interest had received a deadly wound under the sixth

head, when the sovereign secular powers abandoned and opposed it? which things are a useful key to the expressions about giving life to the image of the beast, and healing his wound after one of his heads (which must relate to the sixth) had been, *as it were*, wounded to death. See chap. xiii. 3, and 15, which can be proved to be parallel to chap. xvii. by all the chief arguments needful to prove any thing of that kind.

A variety of proofs concur to show, that the reviving a resemblance of the old corrupt religion of the empire would have in it that guilt of apostacy which is expressed in Daniel, by changing the laws of religion; and which is a chief peculiar character of the crimes of the beast, distinguishing them from those of the Pagan emperor. This apostacy is proved by every argument that shows the conversion of the empire to have happened in the interval between the sixth idolatrous head, declared to be that which existed in John's time, or the heathen emperor, and the seventh. This appears, as is hinted above from chap. xvii. 10 and 11; which shows that there would be a seventh intervening head, which, though a sovereign head, would not be an idolatrous one. It appears from the things necessarily implied in a deadly wound given to the beast. Seeing the beast is not a particular corner, the body of the empire, not considered simply as body politic, but as an idolatrous body, a wound to the beast must be a wound to that idolatry, not merely in a corner, but through the body of the empire; which is confirmed instead of being contradicted, by calling the wound a wound in one of the heads, Rev. xiii. 3. In ver. 14, it is the beast itself that is said to be wounded; an extensive wound to the interest of idolatry through the empire must therefore be intended. A wound unto death must be a wound threatening ruin

and extinction. Such an extensive wound to false religion is necessarily connected with a proportional advancement of the true one. It is not merely connected with it, but upon the matter coincides with it, and seems but another name and notion of extensive reformation through the empire. The same happy revolution is likewise implied in the defeat and downfall of the dragon, described in chap. xii. who (as was in part proved above) was the beast's predecessor in the same seat, and same extensive empire. That downfall, intervening between the reign of the dragon and the rise of the beast, has a striking conformity with the other intimations of the conversion of the empire; and all of them confirm the conclusion in view, that *apostacy* is one of those crimes of the beast that distinguished him from the Pagan emperors, and shew, that the predictions about him cannot be applied to them. And it is a confirmation of this, when considered jointly with other things, that though *whoredom*, taken in a figurative sense, denotes, in scripture style, the crime of idolatry; it is chiefly when it is aggravated by apostacy, and breach of covenant: so that that crime, so much insisted on in the charge against mystical Babylon, that rules the beast, is more applicable to an apostate church, than to an empire that never had been a church.

2. But though these crimes, idolatry and apostasy, are, in scripture, justly called *abominations;* and the last mentioned is manifestly an evil not applicable to pagan Rome, and therefore a characteristic of more modern Romish powers; it deserves still more particular attention, that it is one thing for any society to be chargeable with such evils themselves, and quite another thing to be the source or *mother* of such abominations to other kingdoms; which character has evidently a

peculiar pre-eminence in the description of the seducing power in view, as it is no less evident, that it is a character not applicable to pagan Rome; other kingdoms, conquered by her, as was above hinted, having rather been the mothers or sources of her abominations, while she, notwithstanding all her faults, contributed rather to their becoming more civilized and reformed from barbarity.

Attentive perusal of the predictions in view, may easily satisfy the impartial and inquisitive, how much they insist all along, on this comprehensive and distinguishing character of extensive influence and authority, exercised in promoting corruptions in religion among *other nations;* as it is in a special manner with a view to that influence, and its effects, that so much is said in the predictions concerning the various above-mentioned characters, relating to place, time, nature, extent, and means, of the power so particularly described, and concerning deceiving, intoxicating, or making drunk the kings of the earth; their agreeing to give their strength and power to the beast, and committing fornication with the mother of harlots: things of which (especially when taken complexly) no vestige appears in the character of the pagan emperors; who indeed too oft persecuted their Christian subjects, but were never *remarkable* for seducing and intoxicating kings in matters of religion; as it was not the way of those kings, to agree to give their strength and power to them.

Could it be said of pagan Rome, as it is said, Rev. xvii. 5, of mystical Babylon, that the name of *mother of the abominations,* or idolatries of other kingdoms, was her name, and that that name was written on her forehead? Is it not the most natural meaning of having that name written on the forehead, that the character

denoted by it should not only really agree to the object so named, but that this should be an obvious thing, and of public notoriety among those to whom that object was truly known? Was there ever such a character as that of mother church of paganism ascribed to Rome by others, or claimed by herself? Though her civil power was indeed, in the usual limited sense, universal or catholic, was there ever any such uniformity (Rev. xvii. 13, "one mind") in matters of religion, under one pretended head of unity, as to found the denomination of *Roman Catholic Paganism* through the empire? As it is certain there was not, it follows, that the characters of uniformity and unity in corrupt religion, under one pretended supreme head in such matters, which run through the predictions in view, are sufficient proofs, that paganism is not the thing meant in them. As the ancient civil union of the empire, under one secular power, is, in these predictions themselves, declared to be at an end at the time they speak of, through the division of the empire among ten chief horns or sovereign powers; no other foundation, or principle of unity, could remain, but that now mentioned, to denominate and describe them, as is done all along, as the horns of one beast, and under one common head.

3. Whereas the true God, and his tabernacle, (whether that be supposed to denote Christ's human nature, or any other truly sacred object to which it may be applicable), as also saints and angels, called those that dwell in heaven, were, comparatively speaking, unknown to the pagan emperors; and yet all of them are said to be so injuriously treated by the beast, as to be blasphemed by him, Rev. xiii. 6; this shews, that besides the above more comprehensive general character of being the source ("the mother") of enormous evils through the em-

pire, there are characters in the particular evils mentioned that appear by no means so applicable to ancient as to modern Rome. Particular attention has been justly given to one character of this kind, in the account of mystical Babylon's merchandise, chap. xviii. 13; where, after speaking of slaves, express mention is made of *souls of men;* which is the concluding article in the long list of the particulars of that merchandise; what follows relating only to general qualities of things once possessed, and lost at her downfall. It is an instance worth noticing, of the strange shifts sometimes used against the most natural interpretations of the predictions in view, that it has been pretended, that the words rendered *souls of men,* may, in that passage, denote slaves, when *slaves* are the very next article preceding; and the word rendered *souls* here, is the word that has usually that signification on other occasions. So that the interpretation which the criticism mentioned recommends, lies open to two exceptions: it deviates from the most usual natural meaning of words without any manner of reason; and it makes such a deviation in order to an unnecessary repetition of the very thing last named.

4. It is an argument of weight against applying the predictions under consideration to pagan Rome, that it is not natural to suppose so uncommon admiration, as John describes, Rev. xvii. 6, to be raised by a thing so familiar and well known to him and others, as the paganism of that empire. And if it be objected, that it is not the crimes, but the punishment, then future, that raised such wonder; it is answered, that there is indeed, in ver. 1, a promise to shew to John Babylon's judgment; which promise is afterwards fulfilled, but not till towards the close of the chapter. In the parts of the description preceding his admiration, where we must

seek for the object and grounds of it, it is not her punishment that is described, but her grandeur and crimes, and particularly persecution, in the words immediately before those that express his wonder; which wondering is represented to be so considerable, that the very first thing said to him by the interpreting angel is, *Wherefore didst thou marvel?* Can it be supposed, that it would appear matter of marvelling to the Apostle, with great admiration, as himself calls it, to find it revealed, that the heathen empire persecuted the Christian church, especially if his prophecy was posterior to Nero's persecution?

5. This naturally leads to another more general argument against applying these predictions to the enormities of paganism; which were things of the most public notoriety already, being partly past, partly present; whereas it is the known nature and scope of prophecy in general, and expressly declared to be so, as to the revelation made to John, to describe things to come, and that would not be known, if not revealed.

It is no just exception against this argument, that it is, and must be, owned on all hands, that some things in John's predictions, concerning the Roman empire, relate to things then past or present; as when the great city treated of, is described from its situation on seven hills, its present universal dominion, and former diversity of governments. For though all this is true, it is no less so, that all such historical or geographical descriptions, are not properly parts of the predictions, but subservient parts of the prophetic discourses containing them, needful to point out the empire, or parts of the world, that are to be the theatre of the future events foretold.

The interpretations that apply the predictions about the beast and Babylon to paganism, scarce leave any

thing that is prophetic in them, but what relates either to Babylon's duration or downfall; and it so happens, that the clearest characters given of both these things, furnish some of the strongest arguments against such misinterpretations.

Meantime some obvious properties of these predictions, or prophetic discourses, afford weighty arguments against supposing them to have so very little in them properly and strictly prophetical, (*i. e.* relative to future events), as such misinterpretations must infer. Some view of the pagan empire's unsuccessful conflict against that of the Redeemer was obviously a proper introduction to predictions of that enemy's overthrow; and accordingly some view of that conflict is, in chap. xii, prefixed to great revolutions that ensued. But when it is considered how large, how particular, how circumstantial, the descriptions are, that relate to the beast and Babylon; what pains is taken to describe the beast's seat, his assistants, his power, the means, the extent, and abuse of it, as above considered: to mix vision and interpretations, and to represent the same series of events in various lights in parallel descriptions; and when it is withal considered, that this subject is more insisted on, indeed much more, than any other; is it at all credible, that the scope of all this is little else, than to tell the church, and the world, what was so notour already, that *paganism would greatly oppose Christianity?* Though the former arguments, drawn from the particular distinguishing characters of the subject of the predictions, are sufficiently decisive; yet this more general proof, from the general nature and scope of prophecy, has its particular use; because it is so easy and obvious, as well as convincing.

VII. As to the fifth character, the duration and period

of this seducing power, it is expressly predicted, that the beast should continue forty-two months, chap. xiii. 5. There are no less than four parallel passages, assigning precisely the same durations, partly in the same, partly in equivalent expressions, referring to mournful events; which, in the nature of things, have an obvious connection with his continuance, and must end with it. The holy city, which so naturally denotes the true church, is said to be trodden under foot forty-two months, chap. xii. 2; and in the very next verse, God's witnesses for the truth (who must consequently be mourners for so extensive opposition to it) are said to prophesy in sackcloth 1260 days; which, in round numbers, amounts to the forty-two months in the other passages mentioned. In chap. xii, there are two verses treating of the same subject; a woman clothed with the sun, a character applicable to no other society on earth but the true church; and treating also of the same event, her residing in the wilderness, an emblem of obvious affinity to the import of prophesying in sackcloth: and whereas the first of these verses, ver. 6, expresses the continuance of that event by the above-mentioned number of days, namely, 1260; the other verse, ver. 14, evidently treating of the continuance of the same precise event, expresses it by the same obscurer sort of terms, formerly explained in Daniel, *time, times, and half a time;* these things furnish a decisive proof, that that more obscure expression denotes three and a half prophetic years, which coincides with 1260 days, or forty-two months; for unless this were supposed, ver. 6 and 14, should give inconsistent and contradictory accounts of the continuance of the same event. Thus, whereas the expression in ver. 14, no doubt has more obscurity in it taken

by itself, its coincidence with ver. 6, removes that obscurity.

To avoid repetitions, it is proper here to refer to the arguments adduced formerly in the remarks on Daniel, to shew, that such calculations must not be understood of natural, but prophetic days or years; without which explication, the opposition to the Messiah's kingdom, which, in so many large predictions, taking in so vast a compass of time, is represented all along as of so distinguished and extraordinary importance, would turn out to be one of the least considerable, in respect of its duration, of any that make a figure in history.

It is not needful to enlarge, in enforcing this argument against those of the Romish church that apply the predictions to the old heathen empire; because whether the calculations be meant of natural or prophetic days or years, neither of these ways will correspond with the duration of that empire after the time of the prediction, either as to its heathenism, or its universal civil power; the one extending to about two, and the other to between three and four centuries after John; durations to which one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or forty-two months, can by no imaginable explication be applied.

The chief use, then, of such arguments, is against those who apply the predictions to some Antichrist, who, they say, will appear, and continue about three and a half natural years near the end of the world: and after what is said in the remarks just now referred to on Daniel, it seems unnecessary to insist longer in refuting so strange a supposition, which seems to merit rather less notice than the other misinterpretation of the same predictions, which applies them to the ancient empire.

To the refutations of that opinion, drawn from the

characters of the duration of the beast and of Babylon, it is proper to annex others from the period of that duration; it being of importance to observe, how far the characters of Babylon's fall, as well as of her duration, are from being applicable, either to the fall of Rome's ancient paganism, or of her ancient extensive civil power.

That they are not applicable to the downfall of paganism, is evident from the prophetic account of the instruments of Babylon's fall; which shews, they were to be the same ten horns that formerly had been the instruments of her rise and continuance; and also from the account of the beast's successors in Babylon when fallen, Rev. xviii. 2; it being uncontested, that the downfall of paganism was not owing to such instruments, but, under God, to the conversion of the sovereign powers; and that that which may be called the conversion of Rome, and the downfall of its paganism, instead of filling it with such inhabitants as the beast's successors are described to be in the passage cited, was the happiest deliverance it had ever met with from such things.

That the characters of Babylon's fall are not applicable to the fall of Rome's civil power, is evident, partly, from the account just now mentioned of the instruments and consequences of that fall: for how can it be said, that the instruments of that downfall of civil power were the same ten horns that were the instruments of its rise and continuance? or how can it be said, that that downfall of Babylon, which is described with so uncommon magnificence of style through so large a part of the prophecies in view, as the 18th and 19th chapters of Revelation, besides other parts of the same book, can be understood of any bygone disasters of that great city?

seeing, though, like some other cities, it has been sacked, taken, and retaken, oftener than once, such things have been so far from bringing her to total and final ruin, that she still makes a figure among the considerable cities of the west.

How can the call to God's people, to come out of Babylon because of her approaching fall, be applied by any Christians to the fall of paganism? seeing that was rather a motive to them to crowd into that city.

How can the adherents of the Romish church apply that call to the times of the fall of Rome's civil power? since that fall was the Papal power's advancement.

When persons of that communion, or any patrons of their cause, are zealous for making the mystical Babylon pagan Rome, and the beast the pagan emperor, they seem not to compare carefully these two things: 1. Who were the emperors' successors in Rome after the fall, first of her paganism, and then of her civil empire, according to uncontested history; and, 2. What are the characters of the successors of Rome's former rulers and inhabitants after the fall of Babylon, according to the prophecy, Rev. xviii. 2.

CHAPTER V.

THE PREDICTIONS CONSIDERED ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF TIME IN WHICH THEY WERE DELIVERED.

SECT. I. *Of predictions in the books of Moses and Job.*

1. IN treating of the prophecies in the books of Moses and Job, it is of particular use, to consider the chief evidences of the Christian interpretation of the first promise of grace to mankind included in the threatening against the tempter that seduced them, Gen. iii. 14; which interpretation consists chiefly of the following branches: 1. That by the serpent, against which the threatening in view is denounced, we are to understand, not merely the brute serpent, but the evil spirit that actuated that brute; 2. That by bruising his head is meant, defeating his design of ruining mankind; 3. That by *the seed of the woman*, who was to bruise the serpent's head, is meant one *particular person*, who would be the saviour and deliverer of mankind from the consequences of the serpent's malice, and to whom that singular title, *The seed of the woman*, would be singularly applicable, on account of his miraculous conception; and, 4. That by his heel's being bruised by the serpent is meant his sufferings from wicked men.

1. The first branch of this interpretation is founded

on the preceding history of the serpent's temptation, which shews, that the brute serpent was only a passive instrument, and that the real tempter was an evil spirit, or intelligent, wicked, invisible agent, an enemy of God and mankind; seeing, as his speech and reasoning prove intelligence, and his blasphemous temptation proves enmity against God and man; so his acting in the form of a serpent, no other form appearing, proves him to have been an incorporeal or invisible agent.

These proofs of the character of the tempter are as demonstrative as any proof in other cases of the properties of a cause inferred from the properties of its effects. Nor is it any just objection, that the tempter is called by the name of the serpent; it being suitable to the style of scripture and other writings, that invisible agents should be denominated from the visible forms which they assume; as when angels are sometimes in scripture called men, because of their appearing in human likeness; see also Gen. xviii. And if the words in Gen. iii. 13, relate to the brute serpent, this does not hinder their being really a part of the threatening directed against the tempter who actuated that brute; importing, that on account of the atrociousness of his crime, lasting monuments of it, and of the divine displeasure against it, should cleave to that creature in whose form he acted; which creature itself, being incapable either of deserving or understanding any threatening, it is unreasonable to suppose any threatening to be directed against it, especially by a being of infinite wisdom; so that the interpretation that would fix such a meaning on the divine threatening, contradicts the rules of interpretation that oblige us to understand words in the meaning which is most suitable to the character of the speaker, and to reject that meaning of any words which implies

absurdity, when they may admit another meaning that is not liable to such imputation.

If it be objected, that it is a begging of the question to suppose, that God is the speaker or author of the threatening in view, or that the history that contains it has any higher author than Moses; it is sufficient to answer, that it is God that Moses affirms to be the author of the threatening; and that Moses' books contain such evidence of his superior understanding in theology above all the ancients, as affords sufficient arguments against giving any thing he affirms of God an absurd meaning when it may admit a better.

The Christian interpretation of the threatening in view may be confirmed, by considering the strong objections which the contrary interpretation is liable to. It is proved already, that the first part of the chapter, Gen. iii, which speaks of the *serpent's crime*, treats chiefly of the evil spirit: it is therefore unreasonable to suppose, that the second part of the chapter, which treats of the *serpent's punishment*, speaks not of the evil spirit, but of the brute; especially when the threatening itself expressly declares, that the ground of it is that crime of tempting mankind, in which, not the brute, but the evil spirit alone could be the agent.

Unless the threatening in view be supposed to be directed against the evil spirit, there is no other threatening against him in the whole context, though he be represented as the author and contriver of the wickedness committed, and though the context be made up of threatenings against all the parties concerned in it, the passive instrument itself not being excepted, in so far as degrading monuments of divine displeasure against the evil spirit's crime were to cleave to the form he had assumed.

The interpretation that restricts the threatening to the brute does not agree with the event; because it is not one brute serpent of many thousands on whom the threatening, as explained by that interpretation, is put in execution; whereas it is quite otherwise as to the other threatenings in the context, relating to death, labour, and pain.

On the other hand, if the Christian interpretation of the threatening be compared with events, it receives abundant confirmation from all the various instances and declarations of God's grace and mercy to mankind, defeating the evil spirit's design, recorded partly in the beginning, and partly in the sequel, of Moses's writings.

As the book of Job, whether it was written or translated by Moses or not, may be justly considered as a part of the system of revelation that the church enjoyed in the days of Moses, or near that time, the account given in that book, of Satan as an evil spirit, and an arch adversary of God and man, ought, according to the best rules of interpretation, to be improved for explaining what is said in Gen. iii. of such an arch adversary acting in the form of a serpent; the singular characters contained in these two parts of scripture having so remarkable and peculiar a conformity to each other, as affords strong arguments, that it is the same evil agent that is meant in both places; yea, all the passages in the Old Testament, which speak of evil spirits, and of Satan their head, as tempting men to sin, serve to confirm the Christian account of the serpent mentioned in this ancient oracle.

2. All the arguments which shew, that by the serpent mentioned in the threatening in view, we are to understand the evil spirit that seduced mankind, are so many

arguments for the above interpretation of *bruising his head,* (the seat of his power and craft), as signifying the defeating of his design, by a glorious deliverance from sin and misery; which deliverance cannot be justly conceived otherwise than as a very complex and comprehensive design, carried on through all ages, and of which every thing that promotes the salvation of sinners is a part, though no doubt the chief intermediate causes of salvation are the things to which the words are chiefly applicable. And this interpretation is much confirmed by all the subsequent predictions in which the work or the success of the Messiah, the Saviour of mankind, or divine dispensations subservient to his work, are described, in expressions resembling those of the text in view; as in Psa. cx. 1, 6; Isa. xxvii. 1; Psa. lxviii. 21; Isa. xxv. 10.

3. As to the meaning of the *seed of the woman,* it is evident in general, that this expression must signify the woman's posterity. But that it is not all, or many of her posterity, but one particular extraordinary person, that is meant, is at least rendered highly probable by the considerations formerly mentioned, in comparing this text with Isa. vii. 14, and Jer. xxxi; and the evidence is carried beyond mere probability by all the prophecies which show, that the defeating of the serpent's design should be, in a *singular* and *peculiar manner,* the work of the Messiah.

After mentioning the seed of the woman, the personal pronoun is used in the singular number, *He* shall bruise thy head, (for so the words may be literally rendered); it is therefore an unnecessary departing from the literal meaning of the words, to suppose, that by the promised seed we are to understand, not one person, but many. *The seed of the woman* is an extraordinary expression,

not otherwise explicable, but by the miraculous conception of the person intended. But though the expression be meant chiefly of one person, the great deliverer from sin and misery; yet as Adam and Eve are considered in the context as representing all men and women, so the promised deliverer may be considered here, as in various other scriptures, not as a private person, but a common or public person, representing all his people, who should renounce the friendship of the serpent, the cause of the revolt against God, and should be in a state of enmity or opposition to the serpent and his cause, being in a state of peace and reconciliation with God.

4. As to the fourth part of the Christian explication of this prediction, it is obvious, that *bruising the heel* naturally implies sufferings, though very different from what is implied in *bruising the head.* The prediction implies a conflict, wherein the seed of the woman would undergo sufferings, but would obtain a final and complete victory; and that, by the part of the constitution of his person, which would suffer wounds and bruises. It was his heel that was to be bruised; and it was by his heel that he was to bruise the serpent's head.

The comparative obscurity of this prediction is owned on all hands; but when it is considered as the foundation of other predictions that are designed as explications and amplifications of it, it will be found to be very comprehensive; seeing, in foretelling a conqueror of the serpent, or a deliverer from sin and misery, it contains hints relating, not only to his miraculous conception, but also his humiliation and sufferings, and subsequent exaltation or final victory. And it is very remarkable, that the ideas of conflict, opposition, sufferings, and final victory, which run through subsequent prophecies, and

so often occur in them, are so compendiously wrapped up in this first promise.

The Christian interpretation of this promise is confirmed by the sequel of Moses's history, concerning a party among mankind adhering to the cause of God and righteousness, walking with God, Gen. xxii. 5, serving him acceptably, and worshipping him by offering sacrifices; the significancy of which rite, in relation to atonement for sin, or deliverance from the fruits of the serpent's malice by an atonement, will be considered more fully afterwards.

If we reflect upon the atrociousness of man's rebellion, and how far he was, not only from deserving a promise of mercy and grace, but from being in any suitable disposition to receive it, when indirectly laying the blame of his fall on God, we will find cause, not to wonder so much that the first promise was not more full and clear, but to wonder that any promise was made at all so early. And as to the figurative words in which the promise is expressed, they have an obvious suitableness to the occasion on which they were delivered: for once supposing that man fell by complying with the temptation of Satan actuating a serpent, it was very fit that the promised Saviour should be considered as the conqueror of the serpent.

II. In shewing that the contents of the Mosaic prophecies extend to the several chief branches, both of the history and doctrine of the gospel, it is useful to observe, that in the books of Moses, as well as other prophetic books, there are two sorts of predictions concerning the *enlightening of the Gentile nations;* some which mention only the happy event itself, and others which speak of a particular person to whom that event should be chiefly owing.

1. It was proved before, that we have a prediction of the first kind in Deut. xxxii. 21, which not only foretells in general an enlightening of the Gentiles, but more particularly an enlightening of the Gentiles that was to be contemporary with the unbelief and rejection of the Jews. And in that same chapter, at ver. 43, the nations are represented as called by God himself, to rejoice with his people, at a time when he would, in a singular and peculiar manner, shew mercy to his land and people, avenge the blood of his servants, and break the power of his and their adversaries; which is a remarkable intimation, that Jews and Gentiles should be incorporated in one body, in the true church of God, at that remarkable period of time, when her incorrigible adversaries should meet with a final overthrow.

2. Noah's prediction, Gen. ix, from ver. 25 to 28, contains a remarkable intimation, that the visible church of God, or his peculiar people, should be first among the posterity of Shem; but that, in process of time, by the divine blessing, the posterity of Japheth, who are said to inhabit the isles of the Gentiles, Gen. x. 5, should be made to partake of the same privileges, and be incorporated with Shem. To make this more evident, it is proper to observe, that when it is said, *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem,* seeing it is the scope of these words to express a benediction which would be in some respect *distinguishing* and *peculiar* to Shem, it is unsuitable to that scope, to restrict the words to those relations to God which would be *common* to Shem with all others, even the worst of men; it is suitable to the chief rules of interpretation, to understand what is mentioned as Shem's peculiar benediction, as implying, that in a singular and peculiar manner, his posterity should have an interest in the true God as their God, and that they

should be his peculiar people or visible church; which is much confirmed by the sequel of the Mosaic history, shewing, that it was in the posterity of Shem, for such was the family of Abraham, that the church of God was preserved, when the nations were apostatizing into idolatry. It makes Noah's prediction the more remarkable, that he foretells once and again, that the posterity of Canaan should be, in a peculiar manner, subjected to the disadvantages of servitude; which, however, are not inconsistent with the most essential spiritual privileges.

3. When it is foretold, no less than four times, to the patriarchs of the Israelitish nation, that in them, and their seed, *all nations should be blessed;* it is necessarily implied, according to the scripture-notion, and only true notion, of blessedness, that *all nations should be enlightened* in the knowledge of the true God, even such knowledge of God, as should direct them to blessedness in God, in a state of peace with him, and conformity to him in holiness; without which things, according to the doctrine of Moses, and of the other prophets, and of natural religion itself, neither all nations, nor any nation, or particular person, can be truly *blessed.*

Though it were supposed, that it could not be fully proved from the four promises to the patriarchs themselves, concerning the blessedness of the nations by their seed, that these promises are meant of one particular person of their posterity; yet the prediction of the blessedness, and consequently of the enlightening and sanctifying, of the Gentile nations, is a prediction of a chief branch of the gospel-history, and a considerable argument in favour of the gospel scheme, even though it were not particularly foretold by what means that extensive blessedness was to be brought about. But when it is farther foretold, that this should be brought

about by means of the posterity of the patriarchs, whether by one or more particular persons of that race, this makes the prediction considerably more special and particular, and at the same time affords a strong argument, that the end of God's revelation of his will, and his various singular dispensations towards that people, was not confined to them, but extended to all nations. It is proper also to observe, that in those more ancient predictions, as well as in others that are later and fuller, it is not the conversion or the blessedness of *particular proselytes*, but of *nations*, that is expressly foretold; and that as the conversion of *all nations* necessarily includes that of *many nations*, which is already accomplished, so the prophets never say, that all nations were to be converted and blessed at once. Many passages, formerly cited, evidently show the contrary.

III. To show how it may be gathered from the Mosaic prophecies, when compared together, much more when compared with subsequent prophecies, that the enlightening and blessing of the nations should not only be owing to the race of the patriarchs, considered more generally, but in a singular manner to one particular person of that race, it is needful to consider the following things.

1. Whereas sometimes it is objected, that the word rendered *seed*, wanting the plural number, is capable of signifying either one particular person or many; this itself is of some importance in favour of the Christian interpretation, as it shews, that it is consistent with the natural and proper signification of the word; and if its capacity of a different meaning causes ambiguity, the way to remove that ambiguity is, by comparing different passages of the same writings, relating to the same subject, or subjects that have a connection with it. Now

there are several Mosaic prophecies, concerning which these two things may be made out: 1st, That they speak of one particular person of extraordinary dignity; 2dly, That the characters ascribed to him imply his being the *chief intermediate cause, above all others, of the greatest and most extensive blessedness to the nations.* Both these things are evidently applicable to the first promise. It was proved before, that the *seed* of the woman is one particular person; at least that the promise itself contains very probable arguments for this explication. His being the chief destroyer of the serpent's head, or the chief deliverer from sin, has a plain connection with his being, above all others, the chief intermediate cause of the blessedness of sinners of all nations. It is contrary to the nature of things to separate these characters, as if they might be applicable to quite different persons. Whether the *seed* of the patriarchs signify one person or many, if the honour of being the singular cause of the greatest blessedness of the nations belong to that seed, the honour of being the chief conqueror of the serpent must belong to that seed likewise: seeing, therefore, the destruction of the serpent is, according to the first promise, the peculiar work and honour of *one extraordinary person*, the *blessing* of all nations must be so too. If the nations are said to be blessed, not only in *the seed* of the patriarchs, but *in the patriarchs themselves*, it must be on account of their relation to that seed, and their being the means of bringing him to the world: so that the promises to the three patriarchs, compared with the first promise of grace to mankind, characterise one particular person, the seed of the woman, and the seed of those patriarchs, who would be the author of deliverance from sin, and of the blessedness of sinners of all nations.

2. It was proved before, that the Shiloh mentioned in

Jacob's prophecy, Gen. xlix, is one particular person, characterised by a *singularly extensive gathering of the people* to him; which has a manifest connection with the character of being the author of *singularly extensive blessedness*, or of the blessedness of all nations.*

3. In Isaac's prophetic benediction of Jacob, where it is obvious, that he speaks of Jacob's posterity or seed, it is said, that "nations should bow down to him; and that he should be lord over his brethren," etc., Gen. xxvii. 29. And in Balaam's prophecy it is foretold, that "out of Jacob shall he come that shall have dominion," etc., Num. xxiv. 19.

To show that these prophecies speak of a particular person, who was to have singularly extensive power and dominion over the nations, and that he must be the same who was to be the author of blessedness to the nations; it is proper to join together the following remarks.

1. That it is one particular person that is meant in Balaam's prophecy, is as evident as any thing of that nature can be in the like cases. He still uses the personal pronoun in the singular number: "*He* that shall have dominion; I shall see *Him*, but not now; I shall behold *Him*, but not nigh." He calls Him also a *star*, and a *sceptre*, Num. xxiv.

2. "He that shall have dominion," could not be mentioned for characterising any particular person, unless it were understood of that person *by way of eminence*, so as to denote dominion of *singular greatness* and *extent* over other nations.

3. Both the promises to the patriarchs, and the pro-

* The word in Gen. xlix, rendered *people*, is plural; GNAMMIM, *populorum, peoples;* a word used by our translators, Rev. x. 11; xvii. 15.

phecy of Balaam, agree in two important points, which afford considerable evidence of their being, in some respect, parallel predictions, or of their relating to the same events: 1st, Both of them treat of the seed of the patriarchs; "Out of Jacob shall he come:" 2dly, Both of them speak of a time, when, by some extraordinary revolution of one kind or other, the seed of the patriarchs should have *singularly extensive influence* over the other nations of the world. Ruling *all nations*, and blessing *all nations*, are not indeed entirely the same characters. The first does not necessarily infer the second; yet the second seems to suppose the first.

If it be objected, that though blessing other nations supposes *singular influence* on them; yet that influence may relate merely to the communication of light and instruction, without any acquisition of power: in answer to this objection, it is sufficient to observe the following things.

If the prophecies in view spoke only of *blessing* other nations, without any mention of *ruling* them, the objection would have greater appearance of force: but when it is duly considered, that both these characters are joined together, *universal power* or *dominion* over the nations, and *universal beneficence* to the nations; that both these characters are of a very singular and extraordinary nature; that both are affirmed of the seed or posterity of the same family; that these are characters which have an obvious affinity to one another, the one being evidently subservient to the other, ruling all nations being an exceeding suitable *means* of blessing all nations, and such extensive beneficence being the most valuable end of such extensive power. All these things put together, afford considerable proof, that the different prophecies in view, treat of the same event in different

lights; and that seeing the *universal dominion* promised to the seed of the patriarchs in Balaam's prophecy, is meant of one particular person, the power of *universal beneficence* ascribed to the seed of the same patriarchs, in the promises made to themselves, must be meant of one particular person likewise.

If we consider, what a *glorious design* it is to promote the blessedness of all nations, and how oft it is promised to the patriarchs, that this *design* was to be brought about by their seed, there is good ground, from the nature of the thing, and from the scripture-account of the wisdom and goodness of God, to look upon that blessedness of *all nations,* as the great end of God's singular providences towards that *one nation* that was to descend of the three patriarchs, and towards those patriarchs themselves; and in a special manner, as the great end of any singular dominion over other nations that is foretold concerning any of their posterity.

In Balaam's prophecy, that seed of Jacob who was *to have dominion,* has a title ascribed to him of a very extraordinary nature, Num. xxiv. 17, which perhaps was never given to any person on account of mere temporal dominion; and which cannot be so properly applied to any other, as to one who would be the source of heavenly light or instruction to the nations of the earth. He is not only called a *sceptre,* but a *star.* These expressions, when compared with others in the context, naturally denote light and power of universal extent and influence.

The expressions at the beginning of that same 17th verse, show, that the coming of him who is called the *star* and *sceptre,* was at a considerable distance; that men would see him in a future state, or after death; and that their seeing him would be of singular importance,

Num. xxiv. 17. "I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh." It is reckoned a reasonable rule of interpretation in other cases, to suppose, that very extraordinary expressions have some extraordinary scope and meaning; and that that is the true interpretation of them which is the only conceivable one that makes them clear and intelligible. The expressions in view do not appear otherwise explicable, than by the Christian interpretation of them, and by comparing them with such other scriptures as Job xix. 25, &c.; Rev. i. 7.

For obviating various objections against the Christian interpretation of Balaam's prophecy, it is of importance to make the following remarks. *First*, That the application of the chief things in this prophecy to the Messiah, is abundantly consistent with the application of some other things in it to the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, or of Moab by David; that whether these lesser events be considered as typical of what was to be done by the Messiah or not, they must be considered as parts of one and the same great complex design, viz., the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. *Secondly*, That the expressions importing incomparably extensive dominion, cannot naturally be applied to David; but that the expressions about the conquest of Moab are naturally enough applicable to the Messiah, as the great conqueror of the enemies of the church or kingdom of God; it being very suitable to the figurative style, both of the prophecies, and of other writings,* to give the names that

* Isa. xxv. 10, compared with verse 7—"In this mountain he will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations;" verse 10—"In this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, and *Moab shall be trodden down.*"

——————— "Nec Dorica castra
Defuerint: alius Latio jam partus Achilles."
Virgil. Æneid. vi. l. 88.

belonged originally to more ancient enemies of any nation or society, to the other enemies of the same society in after times. *Thirdly,* Though Balaam, in speaking of the effects of the singular dominion of the seed of the patriarchs, does not speak so expressly about blessing other nations, as about breaking the power of adversaries, this is very suitable to the frame and structure of many other predictions of the Messiah; the ideas of powerful obstacles, conflict with obstinate enemies, final victory after great and long opposition, being frequently blended with the other subjects of such predictions, from the first promise in the Old Testament to the last prophecies in the New.

Balaam's prophecy relates very much to the state of religion among the Israelites, and their peculiar advantages in that respect, Numbers xxiii. 9, 10, 21 to 24. What is said about their innumerable posterity cannot be so well explained otherwise, as by considering the converted nations of the Gentiles as the spiritual seed of the Israelites, chap. xxiii. 10; xxiv. 7; because if we abstract from this, it cannot be said that the number of their posterity could distinguish them from many other nations. The close of this prophecy, chap. xxiv. 22, 24, shows how unreasonable it is to endeavour to restrict every thing in it to the more ancient ages of the world, such as the times of Joshua or David; seeing it not only extends to the times of the Assyrian monarchy, which the most judicious chronologers prove to be later than formerly was imagined, but reaches as far down as the destruction of that monarchy, chap. xxiv. 24.

This prophecy may be farther illustrated, by comparing several passages in it with various other prophecies; some of which have been explained formerly, as others

of them will come under consideration afterwards.—— Compare Num. xxiv. 9; with Genesis xii. 3; xxvii. 29; xlix. 9; Num. xxiv. 17, 18; with Isa. xxv. 10; Amos ix. 12; Obad. ver. 18; Num. xxi. 28; xxiv. 19; with Jer. xlviii. 45.

The Christian interpretation of the prophecies concerning the seed of the patriarchs, as blessing or ruling all nations, may be farther confirmed by some plain remarks on the history of Israel. It is evident, that from the first rise of that people till the coming of Christ, it could not be said, either of the nation in general, or of any one belonging to it, that they either ruled or blessed all nations, or many nations, in any sense whatever. As they were sometimes rather instrumental in inflicting extraordinary judgments on other nations; so they were far from being admired by other nations as a singularly blessed people; though this is the way that some misinterpret the promises about the blessing of all nations. Instead of being so highly esteemed by other people, they seem rather to have been generally speaking the object of their aversion and contempt. This was their case before Christ's coming, on account of their diversity of religion and manners from all other people. This has also been their case since Christ's coming, in a great measure, on account of their opposition to Christianity, and their dispersion, which is looked on as the fruit of it; and in respect of which their peculiar circumstances have, for many ages, verified the ancient prophetic threatenings against them, that they should be a hissing and astonishment to the nations.

It is therefore only in Jesus Christ that we can find the accomplishment of the many promises that one of the seed of the Israelitish patriarchs would bless or rule the nations. Even unbelievers, who deny the peculiar

doctrines of the gospel, must own, that many nations are beholden to Jesus Christ for natural religion, or the knowledge of God, His unity, His attributes, law, and providence; and that this knowledge is a chief means and part of true blessedness. Nor can they deny, but the promises of blessedness to the penitent, with which the Christian revelation is filled, are real means of blessedness, though they do not own the relation of these promises of the divine covenant to Jesus Christ as the mediator of it.

IV. What has been said shows, that the writings of Moses contain a considerable number of predictions, some more, some less clear, really and peculiarly applicable to the chief branches of the gospel-history; particularly, that they foretell the enlightening of the Gentile nations in the knowledge of the true God, such knowledge of him as directs them to blessedness in him; and that their partaking of such blessedness should be owing to one particular person of the seed of the patriarchs, who would be, in a singular and peculiar manner, the author of the blessedness of sinners of *all nations*.

The books of Moses contain a greater number than many are apt to apprehend, both of facts relating to the history of that extraordinary person himself, and of facts relating to his church or people, and his enemies. Concerning himself it is foretold, though not so clearly as elsewhere, that he was to be born of a virgin, being the seed of the woman; that he was to descend of the Israelitish patriarchs, and more particularly of the tribe of Judah. As to the time of his coming, it is intimated, that it was to be after the departing of the sceptre of the ten tribes, and about the time of its departing from the tribe of Judah. His sufferings are hinted at, even in the words of the first promise, about his heel's being bruised

by the serpent; and his subsequent exaltation is intimated, both in that and various other predictions.

As to his church and his enemies it is foretold, in the writings in view, on the one hand, that all nations would bow down to him, would submit to his dominion, would gather to him, and expect blessedness from him: on the other hand, that there should be a rejection and dispersion of the Jews, cotemporary with the enlightening of the Gentiles; which implies, that he who was to be the light of the Gentiles, would be rejected by the Jews. The prejudices of the Jews in favour of their own nation might naturally incline them to think, that at the coming of Shiloh their power and dignity would be raised to the greatest height; but instead of this it is intimated, that though their polity should subsist till his coming, it would not subsist long after; and it was proved before, that the 28th and 32d chapters of Deuteronomy contain surprisingly clear and awful predictions peculiarly applicable to the dispersed state of that people since the coming of Christ.

Notwithstanding this, that same 32d of Deuteronomy, as was observed above, foretells a happy period of time when Jews and Gentiles would unite their religious joys in the worship of one and the same true God, being both incorporated into one spiritual body. And if we compare that prediction with various others relating to the Messiah's final victory over his enemies, such as those implied in the first promise, and in Balaam's prophecy, together with the promises so oft repeated to the patriarchs, concerning the blessedness, not only of many, but of all nations; all these things show, that even the books of Moses foretell that blessed revolution, which is more fully enlarged on in later prophecies, viz., the universal conversion of the nations, and final abolishing of delu-

sion and persecution. The long-continued conflict betwixt the seed of the woman and the serpent is hinted at all along, and the promises to God's church are mixed with threatenings against incorrigible adversaries: but all that is foretold concerning the conflict with adversaries, is subservient to that glorious event, universal light, blessedness, and peace. Though this is not yet accomplished, yet several things that are accomplished, and which at present are visible in the world, are pledges of it; as particularly the subsistence of the church of God among so many nations of the Gentiles, and the distinct subsistence of the Jews, still separated during so many ages from all the rest of the world: and it is of importance to observe the harmony between the books of Moses and the other later prophets, not only as to predictions that are already fulfilled, but as to predictions of things that are yet future, and to which the things already existing have an evident tendency or subserviency.

V. In considering the intimations of the chief doctrines of the gospel that may be gathered from the writings of Moses, it is needful to have in view the remarks made elsewhere on the vail of prophetic obscurity, especially the superior degrees of it which cover the most ancient predictions, that were by no means designed to supersede, but rather to lay a foundation for subsequent explications and enlargements; God having purposed, for infinitely wise reasons, that the mystery of the gospel should be, in some measure, a *mystery hid from ages,* till the fulness of times, Rom. xvi.; and that the light of prophecy should be like that of the morning, which being obscure at first, afterwards shines more and more unto the perfect day.

As such remarks are in a particular manner needful in considering the most ancient intimations relating to

the mystery of the Messiah's person, it is suitable to the intended brevity of this summary, to take only a short view of some of the chief passages containing such intimations, and of the consequences that may be justly inferred from them; referring to other treatises for larger explications of this matter.

Besides the passages in the books of Moses which contain general intimations of a distinction of persons in the godhead, as when it is said, "Let *us* make man;" "He is become as one *of us;*" "The Lord rained down fire from the Lord:" in several narratives of the appearances of God to the patriarchs, the same person who is spoken of as a divine person, is called either an *angel,* or a *man,* or both: which complex characters seem only applicable to the Messiah, as one who was by nature God, by office an angel or messenger, and appearing in the form of a man, as a prelude to his intended incarnation.

1. In Gen. xlviii. 15, 16, Jacob speaks of one whom at the same time he calls, "the God before whom his fathers walked, the God who fed him all his life long, and the Angel who *redeemed* him from all evil;" to whom he pays divine honours, in praying to him that he might bless the sons of Joseph.

2. This passage, especially what Jacob says about *the redeemer from all evil,* has a singular conformity with a famous passage in the 19th chapter of the book of Job, ver. 25, etc., which book was a part of the system of revelation existing in the days of Moses: for he who in that passage is called *God,* has the title of *Redeemer* emphatically ascribed to him; and Job plainly speaks of him as a *divine person* who should one day be *visible to the bodily eye;* for that is the kind of sight that Job speaks of in very strong terms: "In my flesh shall I

see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

3. In the 32d chapter of Genesis, he with whom Jacob wrestled for a blessing is called a man, ver. 24, and in ver. 30, Jacob speaks of him thus, "I have seen God face to face;" in ver. 28, that mysterious person says, "Thou hast had power with God and with men, and thou hast prevailed." Jacob pays religious honour to him in importunate supplication, that he might bless him; and it is said, ver. 29, that "he blessed him there." In Hosea xii. 3, 4, speaking of what Jacob did at Bethel, it is said, that "by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the Angel and prevailed: he wept and made supplication unto him."

4. In the 18th of Genesis, the same person who is called a man, ver. 2 tells Abraham, that he will perform that divine work of giving him a son, ver. 10 and 14; and whereas it is said, ver. 22, that "Abraham stood yet before the Lord;" that verse, compared with the foregoing and following context, gives ground to believe, that it is one and the same person who is called a man in the first part of the chapter, and whom Abraham in the latter part of the chapter calls *the Lord*, and the judge of the whole earth, to whom he was unworthy to speak.

5. In the 32d of Exodus, ver. 20, and the two following verses, God speaks of an Angel to whom several things are ascribed which give good ground to believe, that he is the *redeemer from all evil* spoken of in the forecited 48th of Genesis. It is said of this Angel, that he would bring Israel to the land of promise, ver. 20; it is said, *Beware of him*, ver. 21, which denotes the awe and reverence due to the divine majesty. It is added, *Obey his voice*, which is the general precept so often and so solemnly reiterated, in inculcating due regard to divine

authority. When it is said, ver. 22, "But if thou shalt indeed obey HIS VOICE, and do all that I SPEAK," etc.; these words imply, that it was by the voice of that Angel that God spake to his people. Whereas obedience to him is enforced by two motives in ver. 21, the first motive implies, that he should have the power of forgiving sin; and the second is, that God's name was in him: all these things give ground to believe, that this Angel is he who is called the *Angel of God's presence*, Isa. lxiii. 9, where the prophet speaks thus of God's mercy to Israel in the desert, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence helped them." In Exodus xxxiii. whereas the Israelites are said to mourn because God threatened not to go with them himself, but to send an angel before them, which is meant of a created angel; when God is prevailed on to turn away his wrath, he says, ver. 14, "My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

6. It is by comparing these and the like passages together that we see on what grounds several Christian fathers, and some ancient Jews, have affirmed, that it was the Angel of God's presence that spoke to Moses out of the burning bush at Horeb, Exod. iii. 2, 4; and that it is the same divine person who is called the Angel of the Lord, ver. 2, and the Lord, ver. 4, and in the sequel. The second verse says expressly, that it was "the Angel of the Lord that appeared to Moses, in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush," etc.

7. As Joshua was, for a good part of his life, cotemporary with Moses, it is the more reasonable to compare these accounts of divine appearances recorded by Moses, with another of the same kind recorded near the beginning of the book of Joshua. He who appeared to that Israelitish general near Jericho is first called a man,

hap. v. 13, and afterwards says, that he came as the Captain (or Prince, as the word also signifies) of the Lord's host; which expressions seem to denote a certain subordination in respect of office, and distinction from the Lord, whose host he commanded; yet his being a divine person is implied in his demanding and receiving divine honours; for he requires the same outward sign of religious veneration that the Lord required of Moses at the burning bush, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy;" and it is added, "and Joshua did so."

8. In Gen. xxii. he who is called the Angel of the Lord, ver. 11, speaks of himself in the next verse as the person from whom Abraham did not withhold his only son. It is the Angel that says, ver. 12, "Now I know thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, even thine only son, FROM ME." Compare this with ver. 15 and 16, and with Heb. vi. 13, "Because he could swear by no greater," etc.

9. In Gen. xxxi. 11 and 13, he who is called the Angel of God, says expressly of himself, that he was the God of Bethel, where Jacob had anointed the pillar, and vowed a vow; which passage not only shews, that he who is called the Angel of God, is likewise called God; but shews further, that it is the same divine person who appeared to Jacob at Bethel, to whom so manifest characters of divinity are ascribed, Gen. xxviii. from ver. 12, to the close. Compare also Judges ii. 1, where it is he who is called the Angel of the Lord who says, "I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers," etc.; "and I said, I will never break my covenant with you:" see also ver. 4, 5.

If it be objected against the Christian interpretation

of Gen. xlviii. 16, that the Angel who redeems from all evil, may be a distinct person from the God who is said there to have fed Jacob all his life long; it is sufficient to answer, that if this were the case, the Hebrew verb signifying *to bless,* behoved to be in the plural number, that so the words might run thus, "The God that fed me, and the Angel that redeemed me, may THEY bless the lads," etc.; but instead of this the verb is singular. But though it were otherwise, the patriarch's benediction would still resemble that of the apostle, "Grace and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;" which benediction is justly considered as an argument for the divinity of Christ; because it is inconsistent with the scripture doctrines against creature worship, to pray jointly to God, and to any mere creature, for grace and peace, or any other blessing.

The most plausible objection as to some of the cited passages is, that both God himself and a created angel attending him, may have appeared at the same time, on the occasions recorded in those passages; and that when he who is called an angel seems sometimes to assume divine characters, he must be considered, not as speaking of himself, but as representing and personating the Deity. In answer to this, it is sufficient to make the following remarks.

Whatever imaginary rules of style men may speak of, it is inconsistent with the most essential rules of piety, that any mere creature should assume divine characters on account of its being employed in revealing the divine will. When created angels, or prophets, publish things that can be said only by God, they introduce God himself with such words as these: "Thus saith the Lord."

As to that branch of the objection which relates to the joint appearance of God himself, and of a created

angel, this can have no colour of argument against the passages where divine characters are directly ascribed to him who is called the Angel of the Lord, or the Captain of his host: and this is evidently the case as to all the eight or nine passages above cited excepting two, viz. Gen. xxii. 16, and Exod. iii. 4. Thus in Gen. xlviii, it is not only to the God that fed them, but to the Angel that redeemed him, that Jacob prays for the divine blessing to his grand-children. In Gen. xxii. 12, it is the Angel of the Lord that says, "Thou hast not withheld thy son from me." The expressions in Exod. xxiii. 21, etc., are not said to be the words of an angel representing God, but the words of God speaking of that Angel, in whom is his name, and whom all his people must fear and obey.

It must be owned indeed, that in Gen. xxii. 15, 16, it is not said, that the Angel swore by himself, that he would bless Abraham, and multiply his seed; but that the Angel spoke thus, "By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD:" and in Exod. iii. 4, it is not said, that it was the Angel, but God himself, that spoke to Moses out of the burning bush. But it is proper to observe, on the one hand, that supposing the import of those two passages more doubtful, it cannot weaken the evidence of the other six or seven passages; and, on the other hand, that there are several considerable arguments for understanding these two, as well as the other passages, as attributing characters of divinity to him who is called the Angel of the Lord.

As to Gen. xxii. 16, seeing he who is there called the Angel of the Lord assumes a character of divinity in ver. 12, where he says to Abraham, "Thou hast not withheld thy son FROM ME;" this is a presumption at least, that he is the divine person who confirms the pro-

mises by an oath, ver. 16; especially considering that the things contained in that oath, viz. blessing Abraham, and multiplying his seed, are directly ascribed to him who is called the Angel of the Lord, in the other less doubtful passages; Gen. xlviii. 16. xviii. 10 and 14, xxxi. 11, 13, compared with chap. xxviii.

The characters of divinity ascribed to the divine person speaking to Moses out of the bush, Exod. iii and iv, are in the other forecited passages ascribed to him who is called *the Angel of the Lord,* and *the Captain of his host.* As the divine person who speaks to Moses, Exod. iii and iv, calls himself *the God of the patriarchs;* so the Angel-Redeemer is called *the God before whom the patriarchs walked,* Gen. xlviii. 16.* And as he who spoke out of the bush bids Moses put off his shoes, because the ground he stood on was holy; so the Captain of the Lord's host requires the same outward sign of religious reverence of Joshua. As it is said expressly, in the 2d verse of Exod. iii, that it was the *Angel* of the Lord that *appeared* in the burning bush, there is no other mention made of God's *appearing* in that bush; but after telling, ver. 3, that Moses approached to see that great wonder, it is added, ver. 4, that God spake out of the bush: so that once supposing it suitable to the Old Testament *system of doctrine,* that a divine person should be called the Angel of the Lord, it is very suitable to *the strain and tenor of Moses's* expressions in this passage, to suppose, that it is the same person who is said to have appeared in the bush, ver. 2, and to have spoke out of the bush, ver. 4.

If it were pretended, that the mystery of the Messiah's person were as clearly revealed in such passages, as in

* See also Gen. xxxi and xxviii. in the forecited places.

the New Testament, or as in less ancient parts of the Old, unbelievers might justly except against such pretences: but when it is duly considered, that the same doctrines may be revealed with very different degrees of clearness or obscurity; that such is the wise structure of the scripture revelation, that the more ancient parts were designed to intimate more obscurely what was to be unfolded afterwards more clearly, the former parts laying a foundation for the latter, preparing the way for them, and exciting the church's desire after them; all these things shew how reasonable and useful it is to compare the one with the other, and to observe the gradual progress of gospel light, from its earliest dawnings to the arising of the Sun of Righteousness.

The passages in view contain various intimations, not only of a distinction of persons in the Godhead, but also of the condescension of a divine person to the subordinate office of Mediator, for the redemption and salvation of God's people; which subordinaton is implied in the titles of *Angel,* or *Messenger*, *Captain,* or *Prince of the Lord's host,* and *Redeemer from all evil;* the person so entitled being described all along as having the charge of God's church on earth more immediately committed to him.

With characters of subordination, we find, in these passages, a remarkable mixture of the various characters of divinity that are usually put together, in proofs of the divinity of Christ, collected from the whole of the scripture revelation; particularly divine titles, powers, works, and worship. Divine titles are ascribed to the mysterious person in view, when he is called *God,* or *the Lord,* or *the God of Bethel.* Divine works are ascribed to him, when he is said to feed God's people all their life long, to be their Redeemer from all evil, (see Isa. xliv. 24,)

and when he is said to fulfil to Abraham the divine promise of a son by Sarah. Divine authority is implied in the power of giving or refusing remission of sins, Exod. xxiii. 21. Divine honours are ascribed to him, when Jacob prays to him for his blessing to himself. Gen. xxxii, and Hos. xii. 4, and to his grandchildren, Gen. xlviii, when he is mentioned as the person to whom Abraham was willing to offer up his son, and to whom the Israelites owed religious fear and obedience, Gen. xxii. 12; Exod. xxiii.

Seeing, by the most reasonable rules of interpretation, more obscure passages ought to be explained by others that are more clear, it is reasonable to explain the passages in view, by comparing them with such other texts in the Old Testament as Isa. lxiii. 9, which speaks of the Angel of God's presence as the Saviour of his people; and Mal. iii. 1, where the same person is called *the Lord, the proprietor of the divine temple,* and *the Messenger* or *Angel of the divine covenant,* which was proved to be a character of the Messiah. Yea, it is reasonable to explain them by comparing them with all the Old Testament scriptures formerly cited,* as containing the doctrines of the Messiah's divine nature, subordinate office as Mediator, and future incarnation.

VI. In considering the hints or obscure intimations of the Messiah's offices, and particularly of his priesthood, in the books of Moses, it is of special importance to make some remarks on what Moses says about the priesthood of Melchisedek, compared with what is said of the same extraordinary person in Psalm cx.

1. It deserves particular consideration, that Melchisedek is the first person in all the scripture that is called

* Chap. III. of this Essay.

a priest. Though offering sacrifice, which was a chief part of the priestly office, is mentioned as a chief part of religious worship long before the times of Moses; yet that sacred action was performed by every head of a family that worshipped God; and we read even of its being done by a younger son of the family of Adam himself, viz. Abel. Melchisedek is the first person who is represented as invested in a peculiar and distinguishing manner, with the office of priesthood.

2. By the manner in which Moses speaks of this extraordinary person, he seems to have been the priest, not merely of any particular nation, or religious society, but of all the people of God of all nations. He is represented as, in effect, the priest of the whole world. Though Abraham does not seem to have had any relation to him, but what must have been common to all the worshippers of the true God, he pays tithes to him, receives his blessing, and thus expresses a singular regard to him as his spiritual superior.

3. Seeing, in every other respect, Moses represents Abraham as the most eminent person among the worshippers of the true God, and the most distinguished favourite of heaven on earth; when, notwithstanding all this, he exalts another person, whom he calls *the priest of the most high God*, above Abraham, and consequently above the Levitical priests, his offspring, it is evident, that in this Moses does a thing exceeding opposite to the natural prejudices of a Jewish writer: for what could be more opposite to those prejudices, than to give such a preference to any priest belonging to any nation of the Gentiles, especially to any nation of Canaan? There is ground to think, that it was one of the chief aggravations of the sins of the Canaanites,

that they misimproved the ministrations and instructions of that extraordinary person.

4. As they who look on Moses only as a human writer can never account for this preference; so, in considering him as an inspired writer, it cannot be accounted for otherwise than by supposing some mystery in it, that was to be unfolded in due time, by subsequent clearer revelation. As it was observed formerly, that it is suitable to the best rules of interpretation, to suppose, that extraordinary expressions have some extraordinary meaning and design, the singular and extraordinary things said of Melchisedek had a natural tendency to excite the inquiries of the ancient church of God concerning the design of them, and to awaken their attention to any posterior revelation that might unriddle them. If their obscurity appeared impenetrable without the help of such subsequent explication, such help is afforded, in some measure, in Psalm cx., which was in part proved before, and will afterwards more fully be proved, to be meant of the Messiah. In that psalm, it is said, that the Messiah should be a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek, or resembling Melchisedek; for the word there rendered *order* signifies also disposition or condition, and does not at all denote, that a number of different persons should be invested with that kind of priesthood. The fitness of Melchisedek to typify the Messiah, particularly in his priestly office, is insisted on at large in the reasonings in the epistle to the Hebrews, shewing, that Psalm cx. compared with Gen. xiv. 18, etc., prove, that the Messiah, though not of the tribe of Levi, was to be a priest, a priest far superior to the Levitical priests, a priest and a king, the king of righteousness and of peace.

But what is most directly subservient to the particu-

lar design of this chapter, is *the very obscurity* of the passage in Gen. xiv. concerning this extraordinary priest of the most high God, compared with the illustration given of it in Psalm cx. as pointing to the Messiah. It is of considerable importance to observe the two following native deductions from these two scriptures. 1st, That it is not merely the New Testament, but also the Old, that affirms, that some obscure things in the most ancient revelations given to the church were designed to typify the Messiah. 2dly, That some things in the more ancient revelations were, for wise and holy ends, designed to be left under a greater vail of obscurity, till new light was thrown on them by subsequent explications; as the scope of the passage in Moses, Gen. xiv. must have continued very obscure, (abstracting from other extraordinary means of interpretation), until it was illustrated by David's predictions in the psalm that speaks of the same extraordinary person.

VII. The remarks made on the passages relating to the priesthood of Melchisedek are of considerable use in proving, from the Old Testament itself, that the Levitical priesthood was typical of that of the Messiah. To set this in its due light, it is proper to consider the following things.

It has been oft and justly observed, that as sacrifices anciently prevailed through all nations, it is not possible to account for the origin of that kind of worship, otherwise than by deriving it from divine institution; and that no other reasonable end of it can be assigned, but familiarizing to men's thoughts the notion of vicarious punishment of sin for the honour of the divine law and justice, in the remission granted to sinners.

Once supposing the divine institution of sacrifices, it naturally implies this important doctrine, that though

repentance is absolutely necessary, so that none may expect pardon without it; yet it is not sufficient: it cannot make atonement for sin; it cannot expiate guilt already contracted; though, so far as it goes, it prevents the increase of guilt for the future.

Whereas *making atonement for sin* is the effect ascribed to propitiatory sacrifices, there are only two conceivable meanings of the many expressions which ascribe so great an effect to so low a cause as the death of brutes: 1. The gross Jewish meaning, that the Levitical sacrifices were appointed by God to produce that effect, properly and really by themselves, without any view to a more excellent sacrifice represented by them. 2. That they made atonement only typically, as representing and applying the adequate sacrifice of the Messiah. All the arguments that refute the first of these interpretations establish the second.

Various arguments against the first, and in favour of the second, may be drawn, not only from the general rules of interpretation, but more particularly from the rules of interpreting expressions about ceremonial institutions, from some of the chief branches of the laws about Levitical service, compared with the predictions of the future abolition of it, and the prophetic doctrine about the nature and extensive efficacy of the Messiah's priesthood, as also from the principles of just reasoning about final causes applied to the scope of the ceremonial law.

No doubt, had it been said expressly in the books of Moses, that the Levitical priesthood was designed to typify that of the Messiah, the Old Testament proofs of the gospel doctrine on that head had been stronger: but here, as in many other cases, it is useful to have in view the remarks formerly made on the evidence of *natural* as well as *revealed* religion; particularly, that, for wise

and good ends, it is not of that irresistible kind that will take place at the last day, forcing the assent of the most perverse and inconsiderate; but abundantly sufficient to found obligation to attention and assent, and to convince the sincere and unbiassed inquirer.

1. It is one of the most evident principles of reasoning, about the meaning of words, especially those of an intelligent writer, that when any kind of expressions are, in themselves, capable of two different meanings; if one of these meanings is evidently absurd, unsuitable to the author's character, and inconsistent with his scheme of principles, that meaning must be rejected; and the other, which is not liable to such exceptions, must be admitted as the true meaning. The gross interpretation of the scripture expressions about the atoning efficacy of the Levitical sacrifices, is liable to all the chief exceptions that prove an interpretation to be false: it is in itself highly absurd; unsuitable to the perfections of God, represented as the author of those institutions; unsuitable to the doctrine of Moses concerning those perfections, and to the character of Moses himself, considered merely as an author who gives proof of his singular knowledge in natural theology.

It is highly absurd in itself; because it ascribes so great an effect as real and proper atonement for sin, to so low a cause as the death of brutes.* Making atonement for sin, when understood not figuratively, or typically, but literally and properly, if we take in both what is directly included in it, and what is necessarily connected with it, must comprehend the most important things in the world; such as, satisfying divine justice for sin, purchasing remission of it, access to God,

* See Heb. ix. 10.

acceptance with him, deliverance from death, and all the other miseries that are the fruits of sin, (as, according to the doctrine of Moses, all miseries whatsoever are the fruits of it). To ascribe such effects, any otherwise than typically, to the Levitical sacrifices, is to ascribe effects of the greatest importance to causes that bear no manner of proportion to them; the substance of what was done in those oblations, viz. shedding the blood of brutes, being no more than what was done daily, for no higher end than subsistence to the body, and bearing no proportion to the expiation of the sins of the soul, Mic. vi. 6, 7, 8. But besides the absurdity of the thing in itself, if we compare it with Moses's system, nothing can be more opposite to his doctrine, concerning the holiness, the law, and justice of God, the hatefulness and danger of sin; and nothing more unsuitable to the many awful instances of the terrors of vindictive justice recorded by that author; such as, the threatenings denounced, and partly executed, upon man's first apostasy; the judgments inflicted on the old world in the days of Noah; those inflicted on the cities of the plain; those denounced against the wicked Canaanites; and those executed even on the perverse Israelites in the wilderness.

Without pretending to know all the good ends which infinite wisdom promotes by the punishment of transgression, we are sure of some of them from scripture and reason; such as, supporting the just authority of God's law, and inspiring his universal kingdom with due veneration of it. But neither these, nor any other conceivable ends of punishment, could be promoted by making the Levitical sacrifices atonements for sins any otherwise than typically.

2. Several branches of the law appointing those sacri-

fices, prove they could only make atonement for sin typically; because they were neither sufficient nor necessary for the remission of many sins that were actually pardoned. Not to insist upon the restriction of those sacrifices to one particular place, to the exclusion of all other places, even in the holy land itself, there were many sins that were actually pardoned for which there were no sacrifices appointed.*——If it be objected, that repentance alone was sufficient to expiate grosser sins; it is obvious, that what was sufficient to expiate these, must have been much more so, with respect to lesser sins; and if the conjunction of sacrifices with repentance was not needful to expiate the former, neither could it be needful as to the latter, it being evident, that if there were any sins, the expiation of which required a greater concurrence of causes or means, it must have been the greatest sins, and not the lesser: whereas such difficulties make the scheme of the unbelieving Jews inconsistent with itself, the gospel scheme dissolves them all, making repentance absolutely necessary, without making it the atonement for any sin.——If it be objected, that the great anniversary sacrifices had some peculiar efficacy for expiating grosser sins; it is sufficient to answer, that it is certain, sincere penitents received remission of all their sins, though they died in the intervals between these anniversaries. In the epistle to the Hebrews, it is farther argued, that the inefficacy of those sacrifices, as to proper atonement, is implied in the repetition of the same sacrifices, (and indeed for the same sins,) Heb. x. which could no more take place in real and proper expiation, than in real payment of debt.

3. All the predictions of the abolition of the Levitical

* Compare Psa. li. and Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6.

sacrifices after the Messiah's coming, prove they were insufficient for real atonement, otherwise they behoved to be of perpetual use in the church; whereas their abolition, considered either as foretold by the prophets, or as rendered unavoidable by providence, in the destruction of the place to which they were restricted, shews, that they were neither necessary nor sufficient for any other than a typical atonement for sin, suited to the less perfect state of the church, before the exhibition of the only true and real atonement. The very predictions which speak of the state of the church at the time when the ceremonial atonements for sin should be abolished, describe it as a state of superior advantages with respect to the comforts of remission of sin; as is evident from the promises of remission belonging to the new covenant, in Jer. xxxi. from ver. 31 to ver. 34, which speaks of the time when the ceremonial precepts given at Israel's coming out of Egypt should be laid aside. For though remission, as to the most essential things belonging to it, be still the same, men's comfortable apprehensions of it admit of very different degrees: and according to the prophets, and suitably to the nature of things, superior measures of these comforts, were to be the effects of the actual exhibition of the true and adequate atonement for sin, and the fuller discoveries of God's incomprehensible mercy and grace manifested by it. It is therefore an argument of considerable force on the present subject, that the comforts of the remission of sin were to be increased when the Levitical atonements for sin should be abolished.

4. It can be proved from the Old Testament itself, that the scripture style concerning ceremonial institutions is frequently figurative; as, when circumcision is called God's covenant, and when the paschal lamb is called

the Lord's passover, the meaning is, that these ancient sacraments were signs or tokens of those things, the names of which were ascribed to them. This shews how unreasonable it is, to argue in favour of the Jewish explication of the efficacy of their sacrifices, as if it were more natural, and more probable, because it is more literal: for as the true meaning of words is ofttimes capable of the strictest proof, nothing is more certain, than that in many cases the true, and even the most obvious meaning of words, is not the literal, but the figurative meaning, Psa. xviii. 2, etc.; as is abundantly proved by the best writers on the sacramental style in refuting transubstantiation.

5. The prophecies formerly collected, as containing the doctrine of the Messiah's priesthood, not only prove, that he was to make a *real, proper,* and *adequate atonement* for sin, see Isa. liii. 4, 5, 6; but also that the efficacy of his atonement extended to those who lived before his coming; that is, to those for whom the Levitical sacrifices are said to have made such atonement as they were capable of. When therefore the same effect is ascribed to so different causes, betwixt which there is so vast a disparity; when *making atonement for sin* is sometimes ascribed to him who is represented as a divine person incarnate, and sometimes to the Levitical sacrifices; the only way to reconcile these different scriptures, which were evidently insufficient for real proper atonement, as representations of the sacrifice of the Messiah, which was abundantly sufficient for that purpose; and it is an incontested rule of interpretation, that the explication which alone makes words and writings consistent with themselves, and especially in the most important things, must be the true explication. To all which it is proper to add, that the typical relation

of the Levitical sacrifices to that of the Messiah, is greatly confirmed by all the predictions which foretell the continuance of those sacrifices till his coming, and their being afterwards abolished.

6. The principles of just reasoning on final causes are of great use in proving the most important truths of natural religion, seeing, in proving divine contrivance in the frame of the natural world, we go on this principle, "That the *suitableness, congruity,* or *manifest subserviency,* of the several parts of nature, to certain valuable ends, is a real proof that those things were actually *designed* as means of those ends." If we apply such reasonings to the congruities between the Levitical priesthood, and the things revealed in the Old Testament itself concerning the Messiah, it will add considerable strength to the other proofs of the gospel doctrine about the design of that ancient priesthood, in regard of its evident fitness to give some intimations of the Messiah's mediatory work, to prepare the way for the actual accomplishment and more clear discovery of it, and to put due honour on it, by making the religious worship of the church, in all ages, to have the highest regard to it. And how suitable it was that such regard should be had to it, is abundantly evident from what was proved before, both concerning the mysterious dignity of the Messiah's person, the excellency of his mediation, and its extensive energy, as reaching to the ages preceding its accomplishment, as well as to following ages.

The reasonings about *final causes* are not only applicable to the works of nature and art, but to the meaning of words, and in general of all such things as partake of the nature of *signs* or *representations;* and the reasonings on the subject in view may be illustrated by comparing them with some others which in many cases are

owned to be convincing; such as the reasonings which prove the truth of the key, which is found actually to decipher hidden characters; of dictionaries of dead languages, rendering books written in those languages intelligible; of the solution of ingenious riddles, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; not to speak of ancient hieroglyphics, the true meaning of which might possibly, in some cases, be capable of convincing proof. But one of the kinds of reasoning that seems to come nearest to that in view is, that which convinces us, in many cases, that a picture, resembling to a certain degree a known original, must have been *designed* to represent that original.

The congruities of the ceremonial law to gospel mysteries being insisted on at large in various useful treatises, it is sufficient in this summary to give the following hints.

The appointment of a tabernacle first, and afterwards of a magnificent temple, not merely as a synagogue for public worship, but as the house or special residence of the God of Israel, and symbol of his gracious presence among his people, tended to instruct the church in the most fundamental doctrines concerning our chief end and chief good; by shewing, that it is our chief good to draw near to God, and that our true happiness lies in communion with him: besides the fitness of this visible habitation of the invisible God, to typify the future *Immanuel*, God with us, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, being to be made flesh, that he might dwell (or *tabernacle*) among us, John i.

The mercy-seat covering the ark in the most holy place, where were the tables of the moral law, being represented as the throne of God; this tended to give sinners suitable views of the throne, or sovereign authority of God, as ruler, lawgiver, and sovereign judge of

the world, of whom it is so truly said, that justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, Psalm lxxxix; and to make sinners approach God, with penitential impressions of their own sinfulness, of his infinite holiness, his broken law, and offended justice. Such impressions tended to produce that self-annihilation that becomes guilty sinners in approaching so great and so holy a God. But this might produce terror and alienation from God, without some suitable relief. The Levitical service showed that such relief was provided. The work belonging to the priesthood, taken complexly, had a fitness in it to teach sinners, on the one hand, "That sin was the cause of distance and separation from God; that sinners had no access to God immediately, or without the interposition of a Mediator and his atonement;" and on the other hand, "That through such interposition the throne of God was accessible to sinners." All the ceremonial purifications that were required in approaching to God, in his tabernacle or temple, shewed the need of applying to God for remission and sanctification, and the influence of the Mediator's atonement on both those parts of salvation.

As to more particular institutions, 1. The sacrifices were to be offered up without the sanctuary; they were to be spotless; men were to offer the firstlings of their flocks, and heifers on whom no yoke had passed. 2. The high priest was to enter through the vail into the holiest of all, which was in a manner an invisible place; he was to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice towards the mercy-seat; he was to fill the holy place with incense; he was to appear there before God's throne, with the names of the tribes of Israel on his breastplate; he was also to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifices on the people. As to what was required on their part, they were to lay

their hands on the sacrifices that were offered up for them; they were to perform worship towards the most holy place, and with a particular regard to the high priest's making atonement* for them. With regard to that sacerdotal action, they were in a special manner required to afflict their souls for their sins. In several cases they were admitted to feast on the sacrifices; and what was offered up for the people to God, was given back, as it were, by God, to the people to feast upon.

These institutions had a manifest fitness to represent the principal things which are in some measure revealed in the Old Testament itself, concerning the Messiah's priesthood; such as, his soul's being made a sacrifice for sin, a sacrifice without spot;† his being a woman's first-born;‡ the voluntariness of his oblation;§ his making intercession for transgressors‖ at the right hand of God, or in heaven, which is called the high and holy place;¶ his applying purchased redemption, sprinkling many nations with his blood;** their acquiescing in his substitution and mediation; their founding their hope and pleading on it; their performing acknowledgment of guilt, prayers for mercy, and all other parts of worship, with a due regard to it;†† and their being abundantly satisfied with the goodness of God's house, with the feast of fat things made for all people,‡‡ in being filled with joy and peace in believing.

To all which we may add, that among other things in the holy place, either in the ark, or, as some think, near

* See much more on this subject in *Witsius, De mysteriis tabernaculi Levitici.*

† Isa. liii. ‡ Gen. iii. and Isa. vii. § Psa. xl. 7, 8.
‖ Isa. liii. 12. ¶ Isa. lvii. 15. ** Isa. lii.
†† Isa. xlv. 24, 25. Psa. lxxii. 15, 17.
‡‡ Psa. xxxvi. lxv. Isa. xxv. 6. compare Rom. xv. 13.

it, was Aaron's rod blossoming; which being originally a divine attestation of Aaron's priesthood, was a very fit emblem of the Messiah's future resurrection from the dead, as declarative of his divine mission, and of his priesthood's being acceptable to God; nothing being more fit to represent one raised from the dead, than a dead branch, or a branch cut off from a tree, restored to vegetable life, and made to bud and blossom, and bring forth fruit, Isa. xxvii. 6; Ezek. xvii.

Though no regard were had to the declared experience of the most upright Christians in all ages, as to the advantages resulting from the most ancient representations of the Messiah, illustrated by subsequent explications, and from the many lively expressions in the prophecies applying the sacrificial style to the Messiah's work and office; it is evident from the nature of things, that visible signs are useful means of strengthening men's impressions of the most important invisible objects; as it is evidently suitable to the wisdom of him who is the author both of nature and grace, to have regard to the frame of our nature, in the way of promoting the purposes of his grace.

7. It is not only from other parts of the Old Testament, but from the Mosaic revelation itself, that it can be proved, that making real atonement for sin was to be the peculiar work of the Messiah. For seeing that revelation shews, that it was he that was to bruise the serpent's head, or that was to be the great deliverer of mankind from sin, the redeemer from all evil, and the source of the blessedness of sinners of *all nations;* all these things shew, that he was to be the author and purchaser of remission of sin, which is a chief effect of real atonement for it, a chief thing included in redemption from all evil, a chief part of the true blessedness of

sinners, and necessarily supposed in all the other parts of it.

To ascribe proper atonement to the blood of the Levitical sacrifices, would infer, in effect, that it was that blood that was to bruise the serpent's head, to redeem from all evil, and to bless all nations: so that the gross explication of the atoning efficacy of these sacrifices, ascribes to them the very principal things that are expressly ascribed to the Messiah.*

VIII. Whereas the famous passage in Job xxxiii. 23, 24. appears at first view involved in much obscurity, several things that have been already observed from the books of Moses and Job serve in some good measure to remove that obscurity; and that whether we follow our present translation, or another which is very natural and literal, making the 24th verse to run thus, "And supplicates for him, and says, Deliver him;" and so to express the intercessory prayer of him whom the former verse calls the interpreter and messenger.

The word rendered *messenger* is the same that is so oft rendered *angel.* The word rendered *interpreter* is the same that is so rendered Gen. xlii. 23, and *ambassador,* 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. The expression *One among a thousand* naturally imports, the chief among a thousand; or a messenger, angel, and interpreter of extraordinary and singular dignity. As to the words expressing this interpreter's instructions, "shewing to man his uprightness," though they seem capable of different meanings, it is sufficient to the purpose in view, that all these meanings are applicable to the Messiah. Whether these words be meant of the righteousness or justice of God,

* See more on this subject below, in applying to the Messiah the 40th psalm.

the righteousness of the Messiah, the afflicted penitent's own sincerity, evidencing his interest in God's covenant, or in general the right way of relief from fear and trouble; it belongs to the work of the Messiah to shew all these things in that light that leads most effectually to the relief mentioned in the context.

All the characters contained in this passage are not only really applicable to the Messiah, but more naturally applicable to him, and in a more eminent degree, than to any other whatever. He is called an Angel or Messenger in many scriptures already cited. His being an interpreter, is implied in the Old Testament doctrine concerning his prophetic office; and particularly in the passages above cited from the books of Moses, which speak of him as the Angel of God's presence, who was to be the more immediate revealer of his will to his people. The character of *Redeemer from all evil* implies, that it is he that would direct his people to the true way of relief from all evil. It was often observed, in chap. 1. above, that in the prophecies there cited, one of the principal characters appropriated to him is, that he would be the great comforter of afflicted penitents, which is the work treated of in this passage in Job. All the Old Testament instructions concerning the transcendent glory of his person and offices, shew how justly he may be called *one among a thousand.*

If it be objected, that though these characters are really applicable to the Messiah, according to the other prophetic accounts given of him; yet they are general and indefinite, to such a degree as to be applicable, either to mere angels, or mere human teachers, of eminent dignity; in answer to this objection, it is proper to observe the following things.

As to mere angels, they are never called interpreters.

And though that name might seem applicable to them on account of the external revelations in which they were sometimes employed, it is not conceivable how an angel that should be one among a thousand should be necessary for that work, for which any ordinary good angel seems to be abundantly sufficient; whereas, if the words be understood of the Messiah's internal saving illumination, it is obvious, that this is a work peculiar to himself. Nor is it conceivable how any one mere angel should be in a singular manner concerned in God's granting deliverance through a ransom, or through an atonement; for so the Hebrew word signifies, and so is it oft rendered in the Septuagint; whereas the prophetic description of the Messiah shews, that it belongs to his peculiar work, both to make intercession, founded on an atonement made by himself, and to give the most effectual and saving instructions concerning it.

The most literal interpretation of Elihu's words will infer a *real connection* between the interposition or assistance of the Messenger he speaks of, and the afflicted sinner's relief; which cannot be said of the good offices of mere men or angels, but is peculiarly applicable to the gracious presence, and saving illumination, granted by the Messiah.

Whereas some of these arguments equally exclude mere angels and human teachers, as to these last, it is fit to observe, that it is but seldom that the name of angels, or divine messengers, is given them, and perhaps never in the books of Moses or Job; and that it is not easily conceivable, how it should be said, that it is but one among a thousand of them that can give *outward* instructions concerning the true way of relief from distress or misery; besides that it is evident both from the Old and the New Testament, that it is not on the distin-

guishing excellency of a human teacher (his being one among a thousand) that the success of his instructions depends.

If we compare together the two chief parts of Elihu's discourse in this chapter, it will further confirm the explication given of the 24th verse. From ver. 8 to ver. 19, he speaks first of the necessity of renouncing self-confidence or pretence to innocence in God's sight; and afterwards of divine revelations, exhibited, in those ancient ages, sometimes by extraordinary ways, as by dreams and visions, for the two great purposes of humbling sinners, and of saving them, or of delivering them, first from the self-confidence and self-flattery of impenitence, and then from all the misery that is the fruit of sin. The second part of Elihu's discourse, from ver. 19. to the close of the chapter, treats of the same subjects more fully and clearly, according to the structure of various other prophetic discourses, consisting of two parts; the latter of which contains, not a bare repetition of the former, but a repetition with enlargements and illustrations.* Comparing the two parts of Elihu's discourse together, an unbiassed inquirer will find ground to consider what is said about the incomparable interpreter in the latter part of that discourse, ver. 24, as an amplification of what is said about immediate revelation in the first part, ver. 14—16; as what is said about renouncing self-confidence, and obtaining deliverance, in ver. 9, 10, 11, and ver. 17, 18, is evidently parallel to what is said on the same subjects, ver. 24, 27, 28.

These things shew, that, even according to our English translation of this passage, there are considerable argu-

* See Dan. vii and viii.

ments for applying it to the Messiah: and as it evidently ascribes to the deliverance that it speaks of these two properties, viz. its being founded on a ransom or atonement, and its being in a singular manner owing to an extraordinary divine messenger; what can be more suitable to the rules of interpretation, than to explain such a passage by the prophecies which speak of that Messenger of God's covenant, who was to make atonement for the sins of God's people, and was in all ages, in a peculiar manner, their Redeemer from all evil, and the source of their chief consolation in all troubles?

But if we follow the other above-mentioned translation, which makes the 24th verse run thus, "And is gracious to him, or supplicates for him, and says, Deliver him,', this not only admits and fortifies the arguments already adduced, but furnishes a considerable new argument, that it is the Messiah that is meant by the incomparable interpreter; seeing he is represented, not only as interceding for the sinner's deliverance, but as interceding in the right and virtue of a ransom or atonement which himself has found; which last expression naturally enough signifies, that he himself has paid, or undertaken to pay, that ransom. And whereas some have pretended, that by the ransom here mentioned is meant the distressed man's trouble, or his repentance; it is certain neither of these can be meant, as neither is called by that name in scripture, from the beginning to the end of it: and though repentance is so necessary, that none can expect pardon without it, it is both contrary to the humiliation of soul included in repentance, and to the scripture doctrine concerning it, to confide in it as an atonement for sin.

As both the translations that have been mentioned of this remarkable passage contain arguments for the appli-

cation of it to the Messiah, it is not very necessary to insist much on the question, Which of them should be preferred? but it is proper, as to the translation last mentioned, to observe that it is abundantly literal, because the word or particle which we render *then*, at the beginning of ver. 25, is indeed the Hebrew copulative particle *and*, which at least is more seldom rendered *then*; and whether the verb rendered *is gracious*, signify here to supplicate, or not, while the words, *deliver him*, etc., are supposed to be the words of the Messenger or Interpreter, they must express intercession founded on an atonement or ransom; besides that these words very naturally express the desire of an intercessor, addressing God for deliverance; though they must be owned to be also capable of expressing the will of God, commanding or appointing deliverance.

If it be objected, that the deliverance here mentioned is only temporal deliverance, it is sufficient to answer, that it is suitable to the doctrine, both of the Old and New Testament, concerning the Messiah's atonement, to ascribe to it deliverance from the demerit of sin, both here and hereafter; that the fullest discoveries of a future state were, for wise ends, reserved till the coming of the Messiah; and that the deliverance mentioned cannot be restricted to mere bodily deliverance, if we consider, not only the expressions, ver. 18, 24, 28, and 30, four times repeated in this chapter, (deliverance from the pit,) and what is said about the destroyers, ver. 22, but also the comprehensive expressions in ver. 26, about the mercy and favour of God, which the Old Testament itself so oft affirms to be everlasting, and consequently to extend to a future state.

IX. Whereas the prediction in Deut. xviii. 15-19, etc. concerning God's raising *a prophet like Moses*, is applied

in the New Testament to the Messiah, the chief objections against this interpretation are, that the characters in that prediction are too general and indefinite; that the prediction seems applicable to the succession of Israelitish prophets; and that this appears most suitable to the foregoing context, forbidding the Israelites to consult diviners, and other such false pretenders to prescience.

In answer to these objections, it is proper to observe, that as to the foregoing context, it is not needful to consider this prediction as having any particular connexion with it; that no objection can be drawn from the context against the gospel explication of this prediction, but what may be applied to the opposite explication; and that if the promise of a succession of inspired prophets contained strong motives against the impiety forbidden in the context, the promise of the Messiah contained no less strong motives against the same impiety.

1. Seeing this prediction speaks so plainly and expressly, in the singular number, of one individual person, it is contrary to the best rules of interpretation, to depart from the literal sense, without any manner of necessity, and to suppose that the prediction is meant of *many prophets*, when it speaks so expressly of *one prophet*, repeating the personal pronoun so oft in the singular number; "I will raise up *a prophet*:—to *him* shall ye hearken:—I will put my words in *his* mouth:—*he* shall speak to them," etc.

2. To shew that the chief character contained in this prediction, *a Prophet like Moses*, is not so indefinite as some imagine, but that it contains considerable proofs that the Messiah is meant, it will be proper to prove these two things: *first*, that that character must relate to the things that distinguished Moses from other prophets;

secondly, that these things coincide with distinguishing characters given of the Messiah in other prophecies.

As to the first, it is obvious, that in all other cases, when one person is said to be *like* another, who has several very *distinguishing* and *extraordinary* things in his character, it is natural to understand the resemblance as relating to those things that are distinguishing and extraordinary, and not to the things that are common to all, or many other persons. Thus, if it were said of any person, not only that he is a king, but that he is a *king like Solomon,* it would be naturally understood as relating to that extraordinary wisdom or prosperity that distinguished Solomon from other kings; and not merely as implying, that such a person was *as really* a king as Solomon was; for by that way of explaining words, a king might be said to be a *king like Solomon,* though he were the weakest and most unhappy prince that ever was. There is the same reason against supposing, that the expression, *a prophet like Moses,* signifies only one who should be really an inspired prophet as Moses was. This is sufficiently implied in the foregoing words, shewing, that the person spoken of should be a prophet *raised up* of God. This imports, that he should be really inspired of God as Moses was. If this were all that were intended, the expression *like to Moses* would be superfluous. It is therefore a just objection against the misinterpretation we are refuting, that it makes the most remarkable expressions in the prediction superfluous, and in a manner insignificant.

The pre-eminence of Moses above the bulk even of true prophets, is asserted in two very remarkable passages, in such a manner, as makes it very evident, that to be *a prophet like Moses,* implies a great deal more than merely to be a true prophet. The inspired writer

who wrote the close of the book of Deuteronomy, says, Deut. xxxiv. 10, that "there arose not a prophet since in Israel *like unto* Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face; in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do," etc. And in Numb. xii. 6, 7, etc., God says, "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision.—My servant Moses *is not so*, who is faithful in all my house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth,—and not in dark speeches," etc.

These passages not only assert the pre-eminence and superiority of Moses above other prophets, but give such an account of that superiority, as proves the second remark above mentioned, viz. That the characters which distinguished Moses from other prophets, resemble the distinguishing characters of the Messiah, as described in other prophecies. To have a right view of the things that distinguished Moses, it is needful to observe, that, as is mentioned in the last-cited passages, he was honoured with nearer access to God, and more immediate converse with him, than other prophets were admitted to; that he was honoured with a more extensive trust,* as to all the concerns of the house or church of God, being employed in establishing a new frame of religious institutions, and in raising the church to a higher degree of spiritual perfection, by a new and more abundant revelation of the will of God; that he was the chief instrument employed in a most wonderful deliverance which God wrought for his church; that he was in a singular manner a kind of mediator, or *internuncius*, between God and his church; that he wrought a far greater number of miracles than other prophets, at least

* Numb. xii. 7. "Who is faithful *in all my house*."

that they were of a more wonderful nature; and that as he was all along invested with a kingly power, so, before the consecration of Aaron, he officiated as a priest.

As these things have an obvious conformity with the characters of the Messiah contained in the many prophecies formerly explained, so when this prediction affirms, in general expressions, that the future prophet whom it speaks of, should be *a prophet like to Moses*, seeing nothing is added to restrict that *likeness* to any one of the characters that distinguished Moses, it follows, that it may be very naturally extended to them all; which will make this a very comprehensive prediction. And it is evident, that nothing could make a future prophet more *like Moses*, in the chief things that distinguished him, than the establishment of a new frame of religious institutions, founded on a new revelation of the will of God.

When it is foretold, that the prophet in view should be like Moses, it is abundantly consistent with this, that while he really resembled Moses in the chief things that distinguished him, he should at the same time greatly excel him: and it is observable, that the manner in which this prediction is expressed, had a particular fitness to correct the foreseen prejudices of many Jews, who have been apt to imagine, that never any prophet could arise who should be comparable to Moses.

3. The Christian interpretation of this prediction may be farther confirmed by two native inferences from what we have in ver. 16, 17, 18, relating to the time and occasion of God's promising this eminent future prophet: 1*st*, From ver. 16, it seems evident, that this prophet was promised at the time of giving the law at Sinai; 2*dly*, From that verse, and what follows, it appears, that God's sending that prophet should be, in a special man-

ner, answerable to the declaration then made by the people of Israel, viz. that they were not able to bear God's speaking to them, otherwise than by a mediator, or *internuncius*. When the prediction is applied to the Messiah, its suitableness to such circumstances and occasions can be well accounted for, but not otherwise. To all which we may add, that whereas it was the business of other prophets, to enforce obedience to the law of Moses, the awful threatenings against disobedience to this new prophet like to Moses, seem to hint, that he was to promulgate a new revelation.

Sect. II. *Of the prophetical passages in the Book of Psalms.*

I. Many predictions in the book of Psalms, and other prophetic books, receive light from the prediction delivered by Nathan to David; which speaks plainly of one particular king, and not of a succession of kings, of the seed of David, who was to be the builder of God's house, and whose kingdom was to be of everlasting continuance; which is asserted in a very strong manner, the promise of perpetuity being thrice repeated, 2 Sam. vii. 13, etc.; 1 Chron. xvii. 12, etc. What seems most obscure in this prediction is considered elsewhere. As everlasting dominion is a character of a very singular nature, it is frequently mentioned in the prophetic descriptions of the Messiah, and particularly in the prophetic psalms, such as Psalms xxi., xlv., lxxii., lxxxix.

If some Jews might be apt to understand this prediction, as meant of a worldly monarchy in the house of David, the providences of God towards that house had a plain tendency to correct such mistakes; seeing, in

Rehoboam's time, that family lost the ten tribes; at the Babylonish captivity they lost their whole kingdom; and after the return from that captivity, there was never any temporal king of that family, never any that was acknowledged as a king in any respect, until Jesus Christ: besides that to interpret Nathan's prediction as meant of a perpetual worldly monarchy among the Jews, was inconsistent with the many forecited predictions, particularly those in the books of Moses, concerning the dispersion of that people, and the dissolution of their polity, Deut. xxviii., xxxii.

Whereas it was the Babylonish captivity that in a manner annihilated the worldly grandeur of the house of David, which might tempt many to doubt of the truth of the predictions concerning it, it is remarkable, that when God sent prophets to foretell that disaster, he at the same time armed his people against the temptations that might arise from it, not only by assuring them of a return from that captivity, but also by renewing the promise of the everlasting kingdom to be established in the house of David, Isa. ix; Amos viii; Jer. xxiii; Psa. lxxxix.

Among the various psalms which treat most directly of the Messiah's kingly office, and of his glory and dignity, the second is one of the most remarkable; seeing, as was proved before, it contains the characters of divinity in the titles and honours ascribed to him, and also the characters of subordination so oft mentioned formerly, as not otherwise explicable than by the doctrine of the Messiah's incarnation, and mediatory offices, ver. 6, 8. Together with all this, it contains the singular characters of the Messiah's benefits, representing him as the cause of blessedness to all who trust in him; and the character of universal dominion, or dominion extending to the

utmost ends of the earth. Though the character of everlasting dominion, which is the chief thing in Nathan's prophecy, is not expressly mentioned in this psalm; yet it is really connected with the characters here mentioned: for when once it is supposed, that a divine person, the Son of God, being incarnate, was to have an universal dominion over the people of God, it is evident, that none else but he could have an everlasting dominion over them.

As the 45th Psalm expressly calls the person it treats of *a King*, it asserts, ver. 6, that his throne should be for ever and ever; so that it has the chief character contained in Nathan's prophecy, and expresses it in the strongest manner, "for ever and ever." It contains also characters of divinity: as the king here treated of is, in ver. 2, distinguished from the children of men; so, in ver. 6, he is expressly called *God*, even the *God, whose throne is for ever and ever;* and it is to him that the last verse of the psalm seems most naturally applicable, as ascribing divine worship to him. These characters of divinity are mixed with the characters of subordination so often mentioned; as when it is said, ver. 7, "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Characters of singular exaltation and dignity, such as the prophets appropriate to the Messiah, are contained, not only in this last-cited, but in several other passages of the psalm; as when it is said, that "God had blessed him for ever," ver. 2; that "he should gird his sword on his thigh, with his glory and majesty; and that in his majesty he should ride prosperously." And characters of the prophetic style, concerning the Messiah, and the times of the Messiah, are also contained in the expressions about this King, as Zion's husband,

about his sword, his arrows, his incomparable righteousness, and about Zion's ornaments.*

The King treated of in the 72d psalm is described by characters, not only of universal, but also of perpetual dominion; seeing, on the one hand, it is said, that he should have dominion "unto the ends of the earth; that all kings should fall down before him; and that all nations should serve him:" and, on the other hand, that "in his days the righteous should flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." When it is said, ver. 17, that "men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed," it shews, that he is the person so oft promised to the patriarchs, as their seed, in whom all nations should be blessed. As the word *men*, in the translation of this 17th verse, is not in the original, the last part of this verse, as is observed by good interpreters, may be literally rendered thus: "In him shall be blessed all nations; they shall call him blessed." Singular characters of the Messiah's particular benefits are contained in the expressions which represent this great King as the source of righteousness and peace, even perpetual peace. Though his enlightening the Gentile nations is not expressly mentioned, it is necessarily implied in his blessing all nations, especially in his blessing them with everlasting peace and righteousness. The subjects of the kingdom which the psalmist treats of are represented, ver. 5, as fearing or worshipping the true God, which includes their being enlightened in the knowledge of him; and according to the prophetic style, the prayer, ver. 19, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory," may be understood, not only as a prayer for the enlightening of the Gentiles,

* Compare Isa. lii. 1; lxi. 10.

but as a prediction of it; as indeed all prayers immediately inspired by God, relating to future events, have something in them of that kind. Though the characters of the divinity of the Messiah are not mentioned so expressly in this psalm as in some others; yet it ascribes such honours to the King whom it treats of, as cannot easily be conceived to belong to mere creatures. For besides that it is said, ver. 17, that his name shall endure for ever, and that he shall be for ever remembered by all nations, as blessed in himself, and as the source of blessedness to all others that shall be truly blessed; in ver. 15, he is extolled as the object of daily praise, which is a chief part of religious worship. Whereas it is said, in that same 15th verse, that "prayer should be made for him continually," some apply this to prayer for the advancement of the Messiah's kingdom; but others, not without ground, observe, that instead of prayer "for him," the words may signify prayer "through him;" denoting the sacred regard due to the Messiah's mediation in prayer, and other parts of worship; which interpretation is suitable to the strain of prophetic doctrine concerning the Messiah, suitable to the tenor of this psalm, and to the words immediately following, "daily shall he be praised;" seeing prayer, through his mediation, is a real praising and extolling him as the foundation of our hope and encouragement in prayer. Though the Messiah's humiliation and resurrection are not so expressly mentioned in this psalm as in other predictions; yet as ruling for ever necessarily supposes living for ever, so, when it is said, ver. 15, "He shall live," it seems to be a hint at his resurrection from the dead; for it is not usual nor natural to say of any person, "He shall live," but when we have a view of something that seems to threaten the contrary. The characters

of the prophetic style, in speaking of the Messiah, so often taken notice of above, are obvious in several expressions in this psalm; as when it is said, that "the inhabitants of the wilderness should bow down before him," whom the psalm treats of; that "all kings should fall down before him;" that "he should come down as the rain on the mown grass, as showers that water the earth;" that "he would shew singular regard to the poor and needy," (which is much insisted on in this psalm); and that "his enemies should lick the dust:" an expression much resembling the threatening against the serpent, annexed to the first promise concerning the seed of the woman.*

Though the 110th psalm speaks more directly of the extraordinary person whom it treats of as a priest for ever; yet several things ascribed to him prove, that he was also to be a king for ever. For besides that it is said, that the rod of his strength should be sent out of Zion; that he should rule in the midst of his enemies, judge or rule among the heathen, and wound the head, or be a conqueror, over many countries; when he is said to be a priest after the order of Melchisedek, and that too for ever, it implies, that in him, as in Melchisedek, there should be a conjunction of the priestly and kingly office, and that that conjunction should be perpetual; all which things make it evident, that the person of whom this psalmist prophesies is the same everlasting King foretold in the prophecy of Nathan, and in the several psalms last considered. That his kingdom should not only be of perpetual continuance, but also of universal extent, is insinuated in the expressions about his judging among

* Compare Psa. lxxii. 9, 11, 6, 4, 13; with Isa. xlii; Num. xxiii; Geu. xxvii; Isa. lv. 10.

the heathen, and wounding the head over many countries. When this King, though David's son, is called David's Lord, it is a hint at least at the mysterious dignity of his person; especially when joined with what is said about his exaltation at God's right hand. Though his enlightening the Gentiles is not expressly mentioned; yet when he is mentioned as a priest of the true God, it implies his promoting the knowledge and worship of the true God. His kingly power over *many countries*, and consequently over the countries or nations of the Gentiles, his judging or ruling over the heathen, or the Gentiles, joined with what is said of his priesthood, shews, that his power would be employed in bringing the nations to the kingdom of God. That his kingdom should begin in Judea, is implied in God's sending the rod of his strength (the Messiah's strength) out of Zion. The great opposition made to his kingdom is implied in the expressions about his conflict with the kings of many countries, ver. 6. His glorious success is implied, both in that verse and in the first. When the day of his conquest is called *the day of God's wrath*, it is proper to remember, that it is a chief prophetic character of the Messiah all along, that he should be the great conqueror of the incorrigible enemies of the kingdom of God. And this is a chief thing which this psalm mixes with clear declarations of his perpetual priesthood, and universal dominion. The usual phraseology of the prophecies of the Messiah appears in such expressions as "judging among the heathen," and "sending the rod of his strength out of Zion," Isa. ii. 3, 4; xi. 3, 4; and we may trace the style of the first promise in such expressions as "wounding the head," for the Hebrew word is in the singular number, and God's "making the Messiah's enemies his footstool."

In treating of the predictions of the Messiah's exaltation, it was observed, that the 21st psalm speaks in very strong terms of an everlasting king, or a king whose length of days was to be for ever and ever, ver. 4; which shews, that this psalm treats of the king foretold in Nathan's prophecy, and in so many of David's psalms. If some other characters contained in this psalm appear at first view so general, that they may be applied to others; yet when taken complexly, especially in their conjunction with the singular characters of life and dominion for ever and ever, they make up a singular description of the Messiah, containing the characters of his incomparable glory and dignity, his benefits to his people, and complete victory over his enemies. The words in ver. 6, which we render, "Thou hast made him most blessed for ever," are more literally rendered thus: "Thou hast set him to be blessings;" implying, that he is the promised seed, in whom men of all nations shall be blessed. When it is said, that "his glory should be great in God's salvation," ver. 5; "that God would make him exceeding glad with his countenance," ver. 6, "and set a crown of pure gold on his head," ver. 3; these things have a remarkable conformity, in matter and style, with other formerly-cited prophecies, concerning the Messiah's exaltation, and his singular influence on the happiness and salvation of sinners.* What is said concerning his enemies, from ver. 9, to the close of the psalm, has a complex and singular conformity to other predictions concerning the Messiah's enemies, his success against them, and the judgments that should be inflicted on such of them as would prove incorrigible; and particularly the words in ver. 11, have a manifest

* See Psalm xlv. 7; Isa. xlix. 5, 6.

fitness to show how divine wisdom made the sufferings of Christ himself, and of his people, which enemies intended for ruining his kingdom, the very means of establishing it: "They intended evil against thee; they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform."

The remarks that have been made on several of the psalms which treat more directly of the Messiah's kingly office, and of his glory and dignity, shew how much the prophetic psalms abound in things which were formerly proved, either to be singular and peculiar characters of the Messiah, or characters which in their conjunction make a singular description of him. The several chief lineaments of the same wonderful picture occur in these psalms so frequently, and are expressed in such a manner, as affords manifold proof that all these psalms relate to the same person; and do indeed render this as really evident, though not as easily observed, as though all these psalms lay contiguous to one another, in one large context. The characters of an extraordinary king of the seed of David, whose kingdom should be of universal extent, and of perpetual continuance; a king of incomparable glory and dignity; a king to whom divine honours should be due, (though incarnate); a king who should be in a singular manner the cause of the blessedness and salvation of sinners of all nations, and all ages; meeting with extraordinary opposition from the obstinate enemies of God's kingdom on earth, obtaining a most glorious final victory over these enemies: these characters, and others of the like nature, are so often combined together, though with some diversity as to method and style, that an unbiassed mind, by moderate attention, may clearly discover the same great person and events in these different predictions.

If the psalms which speak most directly of the Messiah's kingly office, and of his manifold dignity and exaltation, spoke as expressly of his humiliation and sufferings, it would make reasonings on the prophecies more easy: but though this is not the case, and though, for wise ends, prophecies are so contrived as to have more obscurity in them than history has; yet there is no just ground to complain of want of abundant evidence, if we consider duly the various coinciding characters in the different sorts of prophetic psalms, as well as other prophecies, and their agreement, both with the history of Jesus Christ, and with one another.

II. In considering the psalms which treat most directly of the Messiah's humiliation and sufferings, it is of particular importance to weigh the proofs which shew that these sufferings are the subject of the 22d psalm; for though these proofs were partly hinted at formerly, it is needful to consider them here more particularly.

1. One considerable argument may be drawn from the special and circumstantial conformity between this prophecy and the history of Christ's sufferings; he whom the psalmist personates in this psalm being described as enduring the very same sufferings which Christ endured at the time of his death. And not only the number of the circumstances narrated, but even the minuteness of some of them, add much to the strength of the argument.

The person whom this psalm treats of is represented as actually in the hands of his enemies, suffering public execution, surrounded with multitudes of enemies gazing at him as a public spectacle, upbraiding him with his professed confidence in God, piercing his hands and feet, dividing one part of his garments, casting lots for another, and bringing him at last to the dust of death.

Concerning this description of sufferings it is useful to observe the following things: 1. That it is by no means applicable to David, who, though he was oft pursued, and in danger, yet was never actually apprehended by his enemies, far less put to death by them. 2. Whereas unbelieving Jews, at least many of them, pretend that the words rendered, "They pierced my hands and feet," should be rendered, "My hands and feet are like a lion;" as the absurdity of this interpretation, and its unsuitableness to the context, confirms the truth of the Christian interpretation; so, although this one verse were yielded to the Jews, it could not invalidate the evidence arising from all the other parts of the psalm.

If it be objected, that the description of sufferings in this psalm seems applicable to any who suffered the same kind of death with Jesus Christ; in answer to this it is proper to observe, that that kind of death was unknown among the Jews, not only in David's time, but several ages after; that there are several circumstances mentioned here that are not common to all who suffered that kind of death; such as, that cruel maltreatment from spectators mentioned in the 7th, 8th, and 13th verses, which nature commonly abhors to give to persons suffering capital punishment; besides the above-mentioned circumstances relating to the sufferer's vesture, and other garments. But what we are chiefly to consider, is the distinguished character of the sufferer here described, as it may be inferred, not only from particular passages of the psalm, to be afterwards inquired into, but from this general consideration, that he and his sufferings are described in an inspired prediction, recorded in a psalm that was to be a part of sacred scripture, in a spiritual song that was to occupy the thoughts of God's church in his worship in all ages. All these things

show, that it is no ordinary sufferer that is here spoken of, but some eminent person, in the knowledge and remembrance of whose sufferings the church of God in all ages would be interested in a very singular manner; which was proved formerly to be the character of the sufferings of the Messiah. And it deserves to be considered, that as it is evident that David is not speaking in this psalm of himself, so in the several other psalms where David speaks in the name of some other, it is generally, if not always, the Messiah that he personates.

2. In the second part of this psalm, which begins at ver. 22, not only the enlightening of the Gentile nations is foretold in very clear and strong expressions, but the transition from the first to the second part of the psalm plainly intimates, that that great event would be owing to the prophetic office of the sufferer, described in the former part of the psalm. For whereas that sufferer is said, ver. 22 and 25, to declare and praise God's name to the great congregation; by just rules of interpretation, that more general expression, *the great* congregation, must be explained by the more particular expressions in ver. 27 and 28, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord. All the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." Though there were no more but that the latter part of the psalm treats of the enlightening of the Gentiles, this itself, by shewing that the psalm treats of the times of the Messiah, would at least afford a probable argument, that the sufferings which the psalm treats of are the sufferings of the Messiah; and it would be unreasonable to suppose, that it is by mere chance that the first part of the psalm describes the very same sufferings that Christ underwent, and the second part the very same great revolutions that Christ brought about in the conversion of the Gentile

nations. But it makes the argument still more decisive, when the same person who first speaks of himself as a sufferer, afterwards speaks of himself as the publisher or revealer of God's name to the great congregation; on the back of which it is added, that all the ends of the earth should be converted, or turned to the Lord.

3. Though it is not said expressly in this psalm, that the person it treats of should rise from the dead, yet this is necessarily implied, if we compare together what that person says, first, of his sufferings from his enemies, and afterwards of his deliverance from them, and of the subsequent glorious administration of his prophetical office, in declaring the name of God. The description given of his sufferings, plainly implies, that they were to issue in death; seeing it is not only said, that he should be pierced in his hands and feet, but that he should be brought to the dust of death; which indeed behoved to be the native consequence of his being in the power of such a number of so enraged enemies. Notwithstanding all this, it is evident from ver. 20, 21, 24, that he would pray for deliverance from the sword, and power, and cruelty, of his enemies; and that his prayer for such deliverance should be heard; which is easily explicable, supposing his resurrection from the dead, but is otherwise inexplicable.—If it be objected, that all this may be explained, by observing, that death is, to good men, a very real deliverance from all enemies and troubles; in answer to this, it is sufficient to observe, that though death is indeed a very happy deliverance to good men, yet this is not the natural meaning, perhaps never the meaning, of the scripture prayers for deliverance from enemies who seek a man's life. The meaning of such prayers is, not that a man desires death, though a real deliverance, but that he desires to escape death: and a

man may be truly said to escape death, or to be delivered from it, though he die, if he rise again. Whoever duly considers the various expressions in these verses, may easily see, that they cannot signify prayer merely for the happiness of departed spirits. But besides the praises and prayers of this great sufferer for deliverance from death, the great things which the following context speaks of as performed by this sufferer, are mentioned as performed by him after his emerging out of those sufferings that issued in his death, ver. 22, 23. So that the different parts of this psalm resemble the different parts of the 53d of Isaiah; where he who is said to be cut off out of the land of the living, is afterwards said to see his seed, and to prolong his days, the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hand.

Whereas in ver. 23 and 24, all the people of God are exhorted to improve the sufferings, and subsequent deliverance of the great person the psalm treats of, as encouragements to hope in God in the time of distress, this is no just objection against the Christian explication of this psalm, but rather a confirmation of it; especially when we consider, that the very last words of the psalm speak of the things recorded in it (and it is evident that the sufferings in view are the chief things recorded in it) as things which the church of God, in future ages, would remember, and would be, in a particular manner, concerned to keep in perpetual remembrance.

The things mentioned in ver. 9—26, 30, 31, have an evident conformity with the things mentioned in other prophecies* formerly explained, concerning the special support which God would give the Messiah in his under-

* Compare Psa. xxii. 9, 10. with Isa. xlii. 1.
30, 31. with xliii. 21.
26. with xi. 4. lxi. 4.

taking; God's forming a new people to himself, who are called the Messiah's seed; the characters of the Messiah's true followers, as a meek and humble people; and the benefits they should receive from him, such as spiritual feeding, which would abundantly satisfy their souls, and make their hearts live for ever.

III. The most plausible objection against applying to the Messiah Psa. xl. 6, 7, 8, etc., is, that that passage may signify no more than God's preferring obedience to sacrifice, or moral duties to ceremonial rites. But when people lay stress on such objections as this, they seem to forget what is said ver. 7, which intervenes between what is said about the insufficiency of ceremonial sacrifices, ver. 6, and about doing the will of God, ver. 8. If ver. 7, be duly considered in itself, and in its connection with the context, it will appear, that the Psalmist speaks of one to whom the following characters must agree: 1. That he is one, not only set apart, in a special manner, for some eminent service to God. (Mine ears hast thou opened, ver. 6,) but that he is *one whose coming had been prophesied of beforehand, in the volume*, or (as the word may be rendered) *in the beginning* of God's book. This itself is an argument, that his coming behoved to be of singular importance to God's church, seeing the prediction of it is supposed to have been a part of the most ancient revelation God had favoured them with; which is a considerable argument, that it is the Messiah that is meant; because, as was proved before, it is peculiar to him to be spoken of by latter prophets, in so distinguishing a manner, as a person made known to the church by former predictions.—See above. chap. iii.

If we consider what eminent future person is foretold in the *beginning of God's book*, or even in the *whole vol-*

ume of God's book, or written revelation existing before the days of David, we shall find, that the *beginning of God's* book prophesies only of the seed of the woman who was to bruise the head of the serpent; and the seed of the patriarchs, who was to bless *all nations*. And even in the whole volume of Moses, no future person is prophesied of but the Messiah; at least none of whom it could be said, as here in ver. 8, that God's law was in his heart, excepting a small part of Balaam's prophecy that may be applied to David as the conqueror of Moab: but this cannot be the thing intended here; because it has no manner of connection with the insufficiency of the ceremonial sacrifices: which leads us to the second remark.

2. The connection betwixt the 6th and 7th verses shews, that he whom the Psalmist speaks of, was to come to the world, to do *that will of God* for which the ceremonial sacrifices were insufficient; for it is the scope of ver. 6, to shew the necessity of the coming of the person after mentioned, in order to accomplish some good purpose which some might expect, but in vain, from those sacrifices: and it is the scope of ver. 7, to shew, that that valuable purpose should be really accomplished by *him who was to come;* which seems to have been one of the ancient titles of the Messiah. Seeing therefore it was proved before, from those principles of natural religion which are contained in the same Mosaic revelation that appointed the ceremonial sacrifices, that though they made a typical atonement, they could make no real atonement for any sin, as they were not appointed for making even a typical atonement for several grosser sins, that were notwithstanding really pardonable and ofttimes pardoned; all these things joined together, make it evident, that it is the most natural meaning of

the passage in view, that he whom the Psalmist personates, was to come to make that real atonement for all sin, for which the Levitical sacrifices were utterly ineffectual; especially when this passage is compared with Psalm cx. about the Messiah's priestly office, and other predictions concerning his sacrifice, which is necessarily implied in his priestly office; the predictions on that head necessarily supposing the insufficiency of the Levitical service; seeing otherwise, as the Apostle argues with the Hebrews, a new priesthood and sacrifice could not be needful, Heb. x.

As what is said shews, that it is not David that is meant in this passage, whose coming into the world had no manner of connection with the insufficiency of the ceremonial law; so it is proper here to repeat the remark made formerly, that where David personates some other who was to come, it is always the Messiah that is meant.

As things that happen every day, are not the proper subject matter of prediction, it is unreasonable to explain this passage, as signifying, that it was written of David in the beginning, or in the volume, of God's book, that he would regard, not only the ceremonial, but the moral law of God; which is no more than to say, that he would be a good man, or do a thing that was common to all good men. Seeing therefore it is contrary to the most uncontested rules of interpretation, to force an absurd meaning on words that are capable of a better, it is a perverting this passage, to give it such a meaning as this, that "because mere ceremonial sacrifices are insufficient, therefore it was prophesied in the volume of God's book, that, lo, a certain person should come to the world, who would not confine his religion to these things, but would make conscience of moral duties."

As in the 22d psalm, after the description there given of the Messiah's sufferings, he is represented, ver. 22 and 25, as declaring God's name and praise in the great congregation; so in this 40th psalm, after saying, that he whom the psalm treats of, would come to do that for for which the ancient sacrifices were insufficient, that same person is represented as employed in the like work in the great congregation. Seeing, therefore, publishing the will of God in *the great congregation*, is explained in Psalm xxii, by enlighening the Gentiles, it is agreeable to the best rules of interpretation, to understand the like expressions in this 40th psalm in the same meaning. And whereas the things here mentioned as the subject matter of the divine instructions given to the great congregation, are God's righteousness and salvation, his truth, faithfulness, and loving-kindness, ver. 9, 10, these are the things which other predictions of the Messiah particularly mention, as things that should be more fully declared by that new revelation by which he was to enlighten the world.—See Isa. lvi. 1.

IV. The enlightening of the Gentiles is foretold, not only in the psalms which speak of the person of the Messiah, but in several others, which either do not speak of him at all, or at least not so expressly as those that have been considered above. And it is of considerable use to observe, how frequently, and in how great a variety of expressions, that happy event is foretold; as when it is said, that the Lord would be exalted on earth, and more particularly, that he would be exalted among the heathen; that he would be King among the heathen, Psa. xlvi. 10; xlvii. 8; that they would say among the heathen, "The Lord reigneth," Psa. xcvi. 10; that the Lord would reign, so as all the earth, and the multitude of the isles, should rejoice at it, Psa. xcvii. 1; lxvi. 1;

c. 1; that all flesh would come to him as the hearer of prayer, and the utmost ends of the earth put their confidence in him, Psa. lxv. 2, 5; that all the nations which he had made would worship him, and glorify his name, Psa. lxxxvi. 9: that all the kings of the earth would praise him, hearing the words of his mouth, Psa. cxxxviii. 4.

As it was observed before, that predictions are sometimes expressed in the form of exhortations, if we compare together different passages in the psalms about the enlightening of the Gentiles, we will find ground to conclude, that predictions of that great event are included in the exhortation to *all nations* to praise God, and to rejoice in him; and in exhortations to those who were the people of God already "to declare his glory among the heathen," Psa. xcvi. 2, 3, "shew forth his salvation from day to day, declare his glory among the heathen daily;" and also in prayers to God for the conversion of the nations.

Thus, in the 67th psalm, in ver. 5, there is a prayer for the conversion of the nations: "Let the people praise thee, O God, let *all* the people praise thee." And afterwards, in the last verse of the psalm, that event is expressly foretold: "God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." This psalm contains a key to some other psalms, which speak of the coming of the Lord to judge the world, in such a manner as should be ground of universal joy, Psalms xcvi., xcviii. For here it is said, in ver. 4, "O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth." Here *judging* is explained by governing: and it is not the time of the general judgment at the end of the world that the context treats of, but the time of the enlightening of the

nations at the first coming of the Messiah, whose ruling the nations is also expressed by *judging* in other prophecies, as in Psa. cx, and Isa. xi. 4; all which gives ground to explain the close of the 96th and 98th, calling on the several parts of the creation to rejoice at the coming of the Lord to judge the earth, as not restricted to the second coming of the Messiah, but rather as meant more directly of his first coming.

It deserves particular consideration, that in the 67th and 98th psalms, the enlightening of the Gentiles is mentioned as the effect of God's fulfilling his merciful promises to his church, and of his causing his face to shine on her; which expressions cannot be otherwise explained, but by considering the enlightening of the Gentiles as the effect of God's fulfilling his promises concerning the Messiah, Psa. lxvii. 1, 2, 3, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us. Selah. *That thy way may be known on earth,* and thy saving health among all nations. Let all the people praise thee." Psa. xcviii. 2, 3, "The Lord hath made known his salvation; his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his *mercy and his truth* towards the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth, etc."

As there is a remarkable conformity between the account given in the psalms of the nature of that revelation that would enlighten the Gentiles, as a revelation of God's righteousness and salvation,* and the accounts given of it in other prophecies; so it is observable, that the psalms foretelling the conversion of the Gentiles

* See Psalm lxvii. and cxviii.

contain instances of the chief different forms of expression, elsewhere considered, in which that great event is foretold, viz., in promises to the Messiah, Psalm ii. and cx.; promises to Zion, Psalm lxvii.; promises to the Gentiles themselves, Psalm lxxxvi. 9; and threatenings against idols and abettors of idolatry, Psalm xcvii. 7.

In order to shew that the prophetic psalms contain various principal branches, both of the gospel history and doctrine, it is proper to observe the following things relating to the history of the Messiah's church, his life, his death, and his enemies.

The prophecies last considered contain various branches of the history of the Messiah's church; seeing they foretell the conversion, not only of particular persons, but of nations, of many nations, yea, of all nations, of the utmost ends of the earth, of the remotest isles of the Gentiles; and more particularly of some famous nations whose conversion is also foretold in other prophecies, such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Tyre; some of which nations were anciently inveterate enemies to the Jews and their religion.

As to the means of converting the nations, though it is foretold that the Messiah would exert great power in that work, it is not foretold, that the nations would be forced to serve the true God against their will, but that they would be a willing people in the day of the Messiah's power, Psalm cx.; that the kings of the nations, and consequently the nations themselves, would be converted to the true God, by hearing His word, Psalm cxxxviii.; and that God would send out of Zion the rod of the Messiah's strength, which is explained by the expression in Isaiah xi., "the rod of His mouth."

The opposition that would be made to the Messiah's kingdom, His final triumph over all opposition, and the

legal establishment of the true religion, after surmounting many obstacles, are foretold in Psalms ii., xlv., cx., lxxii.; which shew, that though at first "the kings of the earth would set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and His Anointed, (or His Messiah); yet at last they would fall down before Him, and serve Him;" would embrace His word, and abolish idolatry.

The revelation that was to enlighten the nations is represented all along, not as a mere general discovery of the being, attributes, and law of God, but as a doctrine of salvation and peace, containing a blessed gospel, or glad tidings, grounds of joy unspeakable in the grace and mercy of God, and directions to solid blessedness in the favour, image, and enjoyment of God, Psalm lxv. 4, 5.

It is foretold, that this revelation should spread from Judea to other nations; seeing it is foretold, that God's salvation, and the rod of the Messiah's strength, should come out of Zion, Psalm xiv., cx.; which name, when applied to denote a particular place, signifies God's church in Judea. Such passages so far determine the time of the great event in view, as to show, that it would happen during the standing of the Jewish church and polity. And it is remarkable, that though David lived long before the captivity; yet, in two different psalms, he hints that it would be after the captivity that God's salvation would come out of Zion, Psalm xiv. and liii.; and the predictions in both these psalms are the more observable, because these psalms treat of the general corruption of mankind, which is the doctrine that shews the need the world had of such a Saviour as the Messiah and such a salvation as he was to send out of Zion.

As to events relating to the history of the Messiah's

life and death, whereas the prophecies last mentioned insinuate, that the time of his coming should be after the captivity, and during the subsistence of Zion, or the Jewish church; and that Judea, or the seat of God's ancient church, or Zion, should be his residence, whence he was to send forth the light of divine revelation; several other psalms give the same accounts with the other prophets of the manner of his life, particularly his mercy, meekness, compassion, and condescension, Psalm xlv., lxxii.; and the circumstances of his sufferings and death, as has been proved at large, are narrated very particularly in the 22d psalm; besides some hints in other prophetic psalms, relating to the same subject, Psalm lxix.

V. Though the book of Psalms does not contain so clear predictions as some other prophetic books, concerning the unbelief and final dispersion of the Jews; yet, seeing several passages in the Psalms concerning the Messiah's obstinate enemies, insinuate that he would meet with opposition, not only from the idolatrous heathens, but also from the Jews, it follows, that the general threatenings against the Messiah's incorrigible enemies must extend to the unbelieving Jews, as well as the heathens.

The New Testament applies to Christ the passage in Psalm cxviii. 22, about the stone which the builders despised, and which God made the head stone of the corner. Though it should be supposed that this text is some way applicable to David, as a type of Christ, in regard David's first low condition and afflictions, and subsequent high promotion, contain some image of the Messiah's humiliation and subsequent exaltation; there are several arguments from the text and context, compared with other prophecies, for supporting the New

Testament explication of this passage as primarily meant of the Messiah. By the builders who rejected the head stone of the corner, none else can be meant here but the Jewish rulers or teachers, or both. The *head stone of the corner* is a title in a singular manner applicable to the Messiah, suitably to the doctrine and and style of the prophecies concerning him, which say that he would be King in Zion, and speak of him figuratively as a stone cut out of a mountain, Dan. ii.; and as a foundation, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, laid by God in Zion, Isaiah xxviii. 16. The 23d, 24th, and 26th verses are chiefly applicable to the most wonderful person that ever came in the name of the Lord to save his people. The whole context has a singular conformity to the events relating to Christ's mediatory undertaking, the opposition made to it, his resurrection, and the Christian Sabbath appointed for joyful commemoration of it, and in fact observed, for so many ages, for that purpose.

VI. That the psalms contain a great deal of the gospel-doctrine concerning the Messiah, and particularly of the doctrine of the Messiah's person, is evident from the passages cited from the psalms in the general view taken above of the prophetic doctrine. As his divinity is implied in the divine titles, characters, and honours ascribed to him in the passages then considered, Psa. ii., xlv., etc.; his incarnation is necessarily implied in almost all the chief branches of prophetic revelation concerning him, and particularly in the predictions relating to his offices, his sufferings, and his descent, as the son of David.

It was proved above, that it is the Messiah who is called *the Son of God* in the 2d Psalm, and *the Son of Man,* by way of eminence, in the 7th chapter of Daniel.

There is good ground to believe, that it is he to whom the same title, *The Son of Man*, is given in Psalm lxxx. 17, seeing the person there mentioned is described by the following characters, which are so attributed to him as to imply their agreeing to him in an eminent and peculiar manner. 1. He is spoken of as one whom God had *made strong for himself*, (as in the prophetic style things future are oft mentioned as if they were past, Isaiah xlix. 2, xlii. 1.) 2. He is called *the Man of God's right hand*, which evidently implies the most singular dignity and honour from God. 3. God's regard to him is represented as the cause of the greatest blessings to his church and people, who are here brought in as applying to God for the most valuable benefits, and that amidst the greatest fears and distresses through his means.

Whereas it is said of the Son of man, ver. 17, that God *made him strong for himself;* the very same thing is affirmed of *the Branch*, mentioned ver. 15; and the strength or support mentioned in both these verses is plainly supposed to be vouchsafed by God, for accomplishing his most gracious purposes in favour of his vineyard or church: which things are arguments, that the Son of man, the Man of God's right hand, and the Branch, are one and the same person; and the repetition of the expressions about the strength afforded to this great benefactor to God's church is an argument, that it would be singular and extraordinary in itself, and of singular importance to God's church: to all which it is proper to add, that the expressions in this passage about strength, resemble these in Psa. lxxxix. 19, "I have laid help on one that is mighty."

Interpreters justly observe, that the word rendered *the Branch*, ver. 15, signifies also *the Son;* but whether

it signify here *the Son*, or *the Branch*, the ambiguity of the word does not weaken the argument for applying this passage to the Messiah. *The Son* is a title appropriated to him in the 2d psalm, and *the Branch* is a title given him in several other prophecies, as Isa. xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5; Ezek. xvii. 22; Zech. vi. 12.

As some psalms are supposed, by judicious interpreters, to have been written after the captivity, (as particularly the 85th, 89th, and 102d psalms), the account this 80th psalm gives of the ruinous state of God's vineyard or church, gives probable ground to think, that it was written after that remarkable period; on which account some may think it the more reasonable to explain the singular titles in this passage, such as, *the Branch*, and *the Son of man*, by the like expressions in the prophecies just now cited; but it is needful to remember, that it is just and reasonable to explain scripture prophecies, by comparing them, not only with such other scripture prophecies as are more ancient, but also with those that are later; all belonging to one complex composure, the several parts of which have a manifold relation to one another.

Though it should be supposed, that the characters of power and dignity in the passage in view, when understood in a lower sense and degree, might be applicable to some others besides the Messiah; it is to be considered, that they are ascribed to the person here mentioned, in such a manner as supposes that they belong to him in an eminent degree: and that they belong in a more eminent degree to the Messiah than to any other, is eminent from the whole tenor of prophetic doctrine concerning him; so that we may justly apply to this passage the rule formerly explained and confirmed, concerning characters which, though of themselves common

to several persons, become singular when applied to one person by way of eminence, and in order to distinguish him from all others.

Whereas the New Testament applies Psa. cii. 25, and xcvii. 7, to the Messiah, it is subservient to the general design of this essay to shew, that there are not wanting in these psalms considerable intrinsic arguments in favour of the Christian application of them; though all Christians must still own, that the apostles, in proving their divine mission, proved the infallibility of their interpretations of the prophecies, even where the intrinsic grounds for such interpretations, through our weakness or inconsiderateness, do not sufficiently appear to us.

Concerning the 102d psalm it is proper to observe, in the 1st place, That it treats of the times of the Messiah, or of the enlightening of the Gentiles, seeing ver. 15 and 22, speak of the time when "the heathen should fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth his glory; when the people should be gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord."

2. That there are several characters, titles, and ways of speaking, which, though they are in themselves truly *applicable*, not only to the Messiah, or the Son of God, but also to God the Father; yet in fact are usually *appropriated* to the Messiah, in the prophetic descriptions of him, in order to distinguish him. When therefore a divine person is described by such characters, it gives ground to believe, that the Son of God is intended in that passage, though it does not follow that the Father is excluded. Thus, for instance, when the Gentiles were enlightened, it is certain they would then be *gathered* to the Father as well as to the Son; yet seeing this title,

"He to whom shall be the gathering of the people,"* is emphatically ascribed to the Son, or is one of his distinguishing characters; wherever we find this title, or others equivalent to it, it is an argument that it is the Messiah that is meant. This is the case in the 22d verse of this 102d psalm, "When the *people* are *gathered together*, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord." The same general reasoning is applicable to other expressions in the context, relating to the divine person it treats of; as when that divine person is represented as "the builder of Zion, arising and appearing in his glory;" besides the singular conformity between the style of the context, about mercy to the poor, the needy, the destitute, and the prisoners, and the style of the clearest and fullest predictions of the Messiah, considered above, chap. i.

As to the 97th psalm, both that and the preceding psalm, of which some reckon it a continuation, treat of the times of the enlightening of the Gentiles; that is, of the times of the Messiah: and the divine person here spoken of, is described by works and characters elsewhere ascribed to the Messiah; such as, ruling God's people of all nations, conquering the incorrigible enemies of God's kingdom on earth, and coming to the world, so as to be present on earth in a singular and peculiar manner. See above of the characters of the Messiah, chap. iii.

From the view taken of several prophetic psalms, it appears, that the book of Psalms contains the doctrine of the gospel, concerning the Messiah's person, offices, twofold state, his benefits, and the religious regards due to him: concerning his person, that he should be a divine person, the Son of God incarnate; concerning his

* See Gen. xlix.

offices, that he should be the universal prophet, priest, and king, of the people of God. It is foretold in this book, as to his prophetic office, that he should so declare the name of God, that all nations should return to God, Psa. xxii., cx; as to his priestly office, that he should be a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek; as to his kingly office, that he should be king in Zion, to whom all nations should submit, whose righteous throne and sceptre should be for ever and ever. Concerning his twofold state of humiliation and exaltation, the psalms foretell the circumstances of his sufferings and death, together with his resurrection, ascension, and sitting at the right hand of God, in incomparable glory and majesty; concerning his benefits, that all nations should be blessed in him, blessed with everlasting life, righteousness, and peace, and with the gracious presence of God, vouchsafing to dwell among them, notwithstanding their former rebellion, Psa. lxviii; concerning the religious honours due to him, that men should be blessed by trusting in him, Psa. ii; that he should be daily praised, Psa. lxxii; that his name should be remembered for ever in God's church; and the ordinances of God's worship should be performed with a special regard to his mediation.

Sect. III. *General remarks on prophecies after David.*

I. In considering the prophecies delivered in the ages after David, it is useful to reduce them to three different classes, according to the following three different periods of time in which they were delivered, viz., 1. The times at a considerable distance before the captivity; 2. The times of the captivity itself, or very near it; 3. The times

after the return from it. In the first period, we have four prophets, who, by the inscriptions of their prophetic books, appear to have been cotemporary for some part of their life, viz., Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, and Amos. The first two are said expressly to have prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; Amos is said to have prophesied in the days of the first of these kings, and Micah in the days of the three last of them. Though the time of Jonah and Nahum's prophecy is not expressly mentioned, it appears to have been before the captivity, because it was before the destruction of Nineveh. In the second period, we have the prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Obadiah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah; and in the third, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

II. Because sometimes people suffer themselves to be dazzled with general confused objections against the gospel-interpretation of the prophecies, as if the contexts where they are found, treated of subjects with which the predictions of the Messiah could have no manner of connection; it is useful, for obviating such objections, and for other good purposes, to make some general remarks on the manner in which predictions of the Messiah are introduced, and on the various principal subjects with which they are sometimes mixed.

1. Sometimes such predictions stand by themselves, detached from all other subjects, as, for instance, in Isa. ii. 1, 2, 3, &c., where the prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles is placed at the very beginning of a new prophecy, without any other introduction, but a general assertion, that what the prophet is about to deliver is by divine inspiration: "The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw, concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of

the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains;—and all nations shall flow unto it."

2. The other subjects with which predictions of the Messiah are sometimes mixed, are in themselves of such a nature, and treated of in such a way, as, instead of founding just objections against the gospel interpretation, afford considerable confirmations of it.

(1.) Besides practical instructions relating to the several branches of true religion, the principal events with which the predictions of the Messiah are mixed, are the revolutions which providence was to bring about by the most powerful ancient monarchies; and particularly the use that was to be made of those powers, in punishing the wickedness of Israel and Judah, and other neighbouring nations; but the threatenings against God's visible church are mixed with gracious promises of safety amidst the greatest dangers, and deliverance from calamities that seemed to threaten her total ruin, particularly the Babylonish captivity.

As these events were the most remarkable revolutions in those ancient ages of the world, divine providence appeared, in an eminent manner, in the events themselves, and divine foresight in the prediction of them; and it was subservient to various valuable purposes, that, on some occasions, the more distant events relating to the Messiah should be mixed with them. Those other events being nearer hand, the accomplishment of them, one after another, served to give repeated new demonstrations, from time to time, of the divine inspiration of the prophets who had foretold them, and so to strengthen the belief of the more important, but more distant things, which the same prophets had foretold concerning the Messiah.

(2.) Besides this, seeing the righteous judgments which

these revolutions were to bring on God's church, might appear to be objections against the most ancient prophetic promises, particularly those relating to the subsistence of the Jewish polity until the Messiah's coming and the establishment of the everlasting kingdom in the house of David, it was needful the church should be armed against such temptations to unbelief, by finding the promise of the Messiah renewed and enlarged on, amidst predictions of events that seemed to threaten the total destruction of the church, and extirpation of true religion out of the world.

(3.) Whereas the prophecies concerning the above-mentioned revolutions contain three different sorts of threatenings, viz., 1. Threatenings against the incorrigible adversaries of God's kingdom in general; 2. Threatenings against particular heathen nations; and, 3. Threatenings against Israel and Judah; all these sorts of threatenings are mixed with predictions concerning the Messiah, and the conversion of the nations. It deserves particular consideration, that the more general threatenings sometimes expressly declare that the events they foretell should be subservient to the more important revolution that was to be brought about by the Messiah; of which we have a remarkable instance in Isaiah xxiv. and xxv. compared together; to which the 34th and 35th chapters have a considerable resemblance. We have clear instances of predictions of the times of the Messiah, mixed with threatenings against particular heathen nations, in Isaiah xviii., xix., xi., and xxiii., which foretell the conversion of Ethiopia, Assyria, Egypt, and Tyre.

(4.) Concerning this conjunction of so distant events in the same complex prediction, it is proper to observe, that it is suitable to the rules of just composition, in his-

torical summaries, or the most compendious narratives, such as these predictions are, to mix together, in one context, events which happen indeed in very distant ages, but which happen in the same place, or to the same society or nation. This remark is useful for answering objections against some predictions relating to the Messiah, where we find, together with events that have happened already, such as the conversion of many nations, other events that are not yet accomplished, and perhaps will not be accomplished till the time which Daniel calls *the time of the end*, or the time of the universal conversion of Jews and Gentiles.

Though we abstract from the predictions which relate more directly to the Messiah, it can be proved from other prophecies, that it is in itself suitable to the rules of just composition in such summaries; so, in fact, the prophets do join together, in one context, events happening to the same city or nation in very distant ages. Thus the prophecies concerning the downfall of Babylon foretell, not only what was to happen to that city in the days of Cyrus, but the desolations that did not happen till several centuries after Christ; for it was not till then that several things foretold concerning that city happened; such as its becoming partly a pool of water, and partly a habitation of wild and venomous beasts, and becoming so uninhabitable, that "neither should shepherds make their fold these, nor Arabian pitch his tent there," Isaiah xiii. 19, to the end. Possibly some people who observed Babylon continuing a great city long after Cyrus, might be apt to object, that though what was foretold about the conquest of it by that prince was accomplished; yet as to other things foretold in the same predictions, there was no manner of appearance of the accomplishment of of them, after so many ages. But the event shewed, in

due time, that it is no just objection against a prediction that there is a long interval of time between the accomplishment of the different parts of it.

The same observations are applicable to the predictions concerning Tyre, seeing it was not till long after Christ that it was so utterly destroyed, as to become a place only fit for fishermen to dry their nets on; as is foretold, Ezek. xxvi. 14, "I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more."*

(5.) The prophetic threatenings against Judah are not only mixed with predictions of the Messiah, but also with promises of such temporal safety and deliverances, as were necessary for the preservation of their civil polity from utter ruin, according to the most ancient prophecies, until the Messiah's coming. And as the prophecy of Jacob, in Gen. xlix. made a difference betwixt Judah and the other tribes, in regard of Judah's continuance till the coming of Shiloh, this difference betwixt Judah and the other tribes is kept up in the later prophecies, even while they foretell the desolations that were to come on Judah and Israel both; and, which is more, these later prophecies shew, that the Messiah was the foundation of that difference, or the foundation of Judah's safety, amidst the most threatening dangers, and of the distinguishing deliverances which God was about to work for that tribe. This is particularly insisted on in rebuking Judah for relying on sinful foundations of safety, or unwarrantable means of relief, such as the confederacy with Assyria in the days of Ahaz, designed for preservation from the Kings of Syria and Israel. These remarks will be proved in considering the predictions contained

* See, in Prideaux's Connection, a particular account of the gradual accomplishment of the predictions concerning Babylon and Tyre.

in Isaiah viii. ix. and xxviii. besides various other passages.

III. Whereas those who oppose the Christian interpretation of the prophecies pretend, on many occasions, that the passages applied by Christians to the times of the Messiah are meant literally of the restoration from the Babylonish captivity, and of the times immediately after that restoration ; ocular inspection, and attentive consideration of particular predictions, is the most effectual way to refute such objections ; but it is useful here to premise some general remarks relating to the return from captivity, which will pave the way for more particular observations on the predictions of that event which are mixed with predictions of the Messiah.

Though the predictions of the return from captivity are far from being inconsiderable, they are really few in number, even in the later prophecies, in comparison of the predictions of the Messiah.

1. There are several predictions of the Messiah that are not mixed with predictions concerning the captivity, or any other subject. If the deliverance to be wrought by the Messiah is sometimes foretold in figurative expressions, which are borrowed from the deliverance from Babylon, or which contain some allusion to it, the contexts where such expressions are found, ofttimes contain clear proofs that they relate to the Messiah. It is otherwise in some few instances, where the expressions are so general, that it is not easy to determine which of these great events they refer to. But this cannot derogate from the evidence of a great many other passages that are more clear and circumstantial.

2. It is of great importance to distinguish betwixt the times after the return from the captivity *in general*, and the times *immediately after* it. It makes the predictions

of the Messiah more particular and circumstantial, that sometimes they so far determine the time of the events foretold, as to signify that they should happen *after that restoration;* though it is never said that they should happen *immediately after it.* That restoration was so remarkable an event, that a more proper era could not have been fixed upon in the more ancient predictions. Isaiah, and his contemporary prophets, prophesied about two hundred years before that great event; and it was the most remarkable event that was to happen to the Jews between their age and the age of the Messiah.

3. Various other things made it very suitable that predictions of that event should sometimes be mixed with predictions of the Messiah. It was one of the most wonderful deliverances that ever God wrought for his church; one of the most extraordinary divine interpositions, for rescuing the true religion from the most imminent danger of total extirpation, and for preserving and extending it. It was in a manner a laying the foundation of the visible church, as an established society, anew. It was a thing entirely unparalleled to see a nation of captives set at liberty at once; a nation who were generally the object of the aversion of the Gentiles, especially on account of their religion, after seventy years captivity and dispersion, to be so highly favoured by the chief of the heathen powers, as to be restored to their country, with very singular marks of regard. These things shew, that the deliverance from Babylon, and the deliverance to be wrought by the Messiah, had so considerable a resemblance to one another, that though the later was incomparably greater than the former, yet there was no event since Israel's coming out of Egypt, that was so fit a type of the deliverance by the Messiah

from spiritual bondage, as the deliverance from Babylon by Cyrus.

4. The predictions of the Messiah are a continuation of the history contained in the predictions of the return from captivity; and as it is suitable to the rules of just composition in historical summaries, especially in histories of revolutions, after one extraordinary event, to mention the most extraordinary events that happened afterwards to the same nation, so the predictions concerning the times of the Messiah may justly be considered as carrying forwards the history of the church after her return from captivity.

5. Besides all this, the return from Babylon was subservient to the accomplishment of the ancient predictions of the Messiah, many of which must have been made void, if Zion had perished in that captivity; seeing so many predictions shew, that it was in Judea, and during the subsistence of the Jewish state, that the Messiah's great undertaking was to be accomplished.

The deliverance from Babylon had a real tendency, in various respects, to that enlightening of the Gentiles which the Messiah was to accomplish. That great event, whether considered as a singular divine interposition in favour of the Jewish nation, or as an accomplishment of a Jewish prophecy, tended to awaken the Gentiles to attend to the light of divine revelation that illuminated the Jews. And there is ground to believe, that it was not without considerable success that way; seeing, though it did not produce such a national conversion of the Gentiles as was afterwards the effect of the gospel, it might contribute to prepare the way for that great effect by the conversion of proselytes, and the establishment of synagogues in the eastern parts of the world.

It deserves particular consideration, that the enlighten-

ing of the nations in the knowledge of the true God is expressly mentioned as a glorious design, to which the deliverance of the Jews by Cyrus was subservient. Isaiah xlv. 5, 6, "I girded thee, though *thou hast not known me;* that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is none else."

6. When unbelievers pretend, that the prophecies in Isaiah which Christians apply to the times of the Messiah were really meant of the times *immediately* or *soon* after the return from captivity; they must either suppose that the writer of the book of Isaiah lived before the captivity, and that the book may be genuine; or that the writer lived after the return from the captivity, and that the book is spurious. The first supposition proves Isaiah to have been divinely inspired, as living so long before those great events, and yet delivering so full and clear predictions concerning them. The second supposition must infer, that the spurious writer of the book of Isaiah, living after the return from captivity, described certain great events as happening in those times, such as the conversion of the Gentile nations, which himself and the whole Jewish nation knew did not happen. It is unreasonable to suppose, that either the writer of such a book should be capable of such absurdity, or that the Jewish nation should put into their sacred canon things they knew to be so notorious falsehoods.

7. It is evident from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and of the prophets who prophesied soon after the return from captivity, that the state of the Jewish Church and nation at that time was exceeding unlike what we find in the prophetic descriptions of the happiness of the church in the passages applied to the Messiah. Though what Cyrus did for the church of God was in itself a

glorious deliverance all things considered; yet, for a long time after, the church continued in a very low condition. The Gentile nations were not enlightened; so far from it, that the neighbouring nations strongly opposed the rebuilding of the Jewish city and temple; and their opposition was long successful. Instead of that glorious light described in the predictions of the Messiah, the Jews were in a state of much ignorance of their law; their unlawful marriages and other abuses, shew how much they had neglected it. Nehemiah came to Judea many years after the deliverance by Cyrus, yet in his time it is said of the Jews in Judea, that they were "a remnant in great affliction and reproach; that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down, and the gates thereof burnt with fire." And it appears, both from his book and that of Ezra, that their work consisted, in a great measure, of a struggle with the Jews of note and influence, for reforming gross abuses.

8. In the predictions applied to the Messiah, the prophets are so far from saying, that the events they foretell were to happen *immediately* after the return from captivity, that, on several occasions, they plainly say the contrary. Thus, for instance, Isaiah, chap. ii. 2, 3, and Micah, chap. iv. 1, 2, foretell, that the conversion of the Gentile nations should happen in the LAST DAYS; which expression, whether it be understood of the *last days* of the Jewish polity, or the last ages of the world, according to either of these acceptations, must set that great event at a considerable distance from the return from captivity; and when Jeremiah, chap. iii. 16, 17, speaks of "the gathering of the nations to the name of the Lord," he speaks of it, not as immediately after that restoration, but after the restored people "should be multiplied and increased in the land," which behoved to be

the work of time. And Daniel, together with the other three prophets who prophesied after the captivity, speaks of the events relating to the Messiah, and the calling of the nations, as still at a distance.

IV. In considering the other chief subjects with which predictions of the Messiah are mixed, it is proper to observe, that they are often mixed with exhortations to Zion, or Jacob, Isa. xli., xliii., or the true people of God, to guard against despondency, amidst the calamities which the prophets foretell; which is evidently suitable to what was proved above about the connection between Zion's safety and God's mercy in the Messiah, the foundation of Zion's hope and happiness, and the great evidence of God's regard to her. And as it was a chief design and effect of the Messiah's doctrine to abolish idolatry, predictions of that event are wisely mixed with divine instructions and reasonings, tending to bring it about in the way of persuasion, see Isa. xli. 7; xliv. 12, as no doubt the prophetic reasonings concerning the wickedness and extravagant folly of idolatry, in conjunction with other scripture instructions, contributed by the divine blessing to that conversion of the idolatrous nations which is so frequently foretold.

V. Whereas it must be owned, as hinted above, that the figurative expressions concerning the deliverance to be wrought by the Messiah, are sometimes borrowed from the deliverance from the captivity, or contain an allusion to it; to shew how unreasonable it is to make this an objection against the evidence of the predictions applied to the Messiah, it is useful to make the following remarks on these prophetic figures.

1. In many instances, the spiritual meaning of these figurative expressions is easily determined by a number of more clear expressions in the same contexts. Thus,

for example, though the predictions in Isa. xlii., xlix., lv., speak of a deliverer of prisoners and captives, and of one who was to lead forth his people with peace, and make them go out with joy; yet the whole tenor of these predictions shows, that it is not the deliverance from Babylonish captivity, but the far more excellent spiritual deliverance by the Messiah, that they treat of. These chapters, instead of speaking of a deliverer of the Jews only, speak clearly of one who was to be a light to the Gentiles; to whom the Gentiles should seek; who should bring forth judgment to the Gentiles; who should make the isles wait for his law; of one who, while he was to be thus honoured by the Gentiles, should be rejected by the Jews; of one who was to be God's salvation to the ends of the earth, God's covenant to the people, the mystical David, to whom the sure mercies of God's everlasting covenant should be owing in so singular a manner, that they are called, *his mercies, the sure mercies of David,* Isa. lv. These, and the like expressions, prove clearly, that the predictions which contain them, relate to the Messiah, even to Jesus Christ, and not to the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity; and that consequently any expressions in these predictions that seem to be borrowed from the return from that, or any other temporal captivity, must be figurative, and must be meant of the spiritual deliverance or salvation from spiritual thraldom by the Messiah. This is more abundantly confirmed by all the many arguments formerly adduced to prove, that, notwithstanding some figurative expressions, the Jewish notion of a temporal Messiah is inconsistent with the whole frame of prophetic instructions concerning him; and that it was really in order to a spiritual deliverance or salvation that the Messiah was to come.

2. In those psalms of David which contain no predictions of the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity, and in the latest prophecies, which were written after that deliverance was past, the spiritual deliverance to be wrought by the Messiah is expressed by figures borrowed from temporal captivity and imprisonment; as when it is said, Psa. lxviii. 18, etc., that the Messiah having ascended on high, would lead captivity captive, and receive gifts for men, that God might dwell among them: and in Zech. ix, which is a prophecy that was written after the Babylonish captivity and imprisonments were at an end, and speaks plainly of the Messiah, in ver. 9, and downward, it is said, ver. 11, that by "the blood of the covenant," or (as was proved formerly) by the blood of the Messiah, "prisoners should be brought out of the pit wherein is no water."

3. As it is manifestly subservient to edification, and particularly to due esteem of the spiritual salvation, or deliverance from sin, by the Messiah, that it is expressed by figures borrowed from those external deliverances, concerning the worth of which men have the most lively sentiment, Isa. liii; Psa. xxii. 26, such as deliverances from diseases or death, it is obvious, that there is the same fitness in expressing the same salvation by deliverance from captivity or imprisonment, such expressions having the same instructive tendency.

All the remarks made above, concerning the manifold relation between these two great events, the deliverance from Babylon, and the deliverance by Christ, shew how fit and how natural it is, that, in writings which treat of both those events, the descriptions given of the one should be sometimes expressed in words borrowed from the other, without confounding the events, but still keeping up the necessary distinction between them;

and this has been proved to be the case as to the predictions in view.

It appears from the book of Job, which is one of the most ancient writings in the world, that returning from captivity, or turning a man's captivity, has been an ancient phrase, to express great deliverances, in general, of whatever kind. For whereas it is said, Job xlii. 10, that "the Lord turned the captivity of Job," it is evident, that that expression is not taken in the literal sense, but only to express relief from calamities; seeing it is plain, from the history of that good man, that though he was in great affliction, yet he was not a captive among enemies, but at home among friends, who had come to comfort him.

These remarks serve to determine the spiritual meaning, not only of such expressions as, *captivity*, *captives*, or *prisoners*, in the passages in view, but also of such other expressions, as *going forth*, or *leading forth*, and the *returning of the redeemed of the Lord to Zion*, in Isa. xxxv. and li. Nor is it more difficult to conceive the spiritual meaning of such expressions as *the redeemed returning to Zion*, than of such expressions as we have in Isa. ii. 2, where *all nations* are said to *flow unto Zion*. The obvious absurdity of supposing all nations to come to reside in one city, makes it evident, that the flowing of all nations to Zion, is best explained by the words in the next verse, which shew, that God's word should spread from Zion to all nations, and so incorporate them into Zion, the church of God.

VI. Whereas several predictions concerning the times of the Messiah contain promises, not only to *Judah* but *Israel*, it is needful to observe, that though it was chiefly Judah that returned from captivity to re-people the land of Canaan, yet a part of the ten tribes returned along

with them, and, probably, not only at the first return, in the days of Cyrus, but on various occasions afterwards. The promise of return from captivity is expressly directed to Israel, as distinguished from Judah, Jer. iii; where it is said, ver. 11, that Israel had justified herself more than treacherous Judah; and immediately after, the prophet is appointed to exhort Israel, thus distinguished from Judah, to repentance, and to promise that God would "take them one of a city, and two of a family, and bring them again to Zion." Though these expressions, "one of a city, and two of a family," import, that it was comparatively but a small remnant of Israel that should return, whence it was no wonder that they were swallowed up, as it were, of Judah; yet it is promised to that remnant, ver. 16, (for it is to them the words in that verse are directed), that they should multiply and increase in the land; and ver. 18 speaks of "the house of Judah as walking with the house of Israel, and coming together out of the land of the north, to the land given to their fathers." Whereas from the times of Rehoboam until the captivity, Israel, or the ten tribes who revolted from the house of David, (and were generally under idolatrous kings), were a distinct people from Judah, the prophets justly mention it as a considerable advantage in the state of God's church after the return from captivity, that that distinction should cease. From these remarks, it appears, that when we read of a restoration, not only of Judah but Israel, it is not always needful to understand it as meant of the final restoration of all Israel, at the time of the universal conversion of the nations, Rom. xi, (though that no doubt is the subject of several predictions, as was formerly proved). Some predictions of restoration from captivity, though they extend not only to Judah, but to Israel, are plainly

meant of the return from Babylon, the people of Israel who shared in that benefit not being too inconsiderable to be the subject matter of prophecy. But a chief use of these remarks is, to explain the predictions of the Messiah, as governing, not only Judah, but Israel.

VII. And whereas several predictions speak of Judah and Israel, not only as both governed by the Messiah, but also as dwelling safely, and in prosperity under him, which may appear not so consistent with the predictions concerning the dispersion of the Jews, and the persecution of the Christians, in the times of the Messiah; to remove such appearances of inconsistency, it is proper to observe the following things.

1. The promises of salvation, safety, or comfort, that are contained in the predictions of the Messiah, are made only to those who should obey the Messiah, whether Jews or Gentiles. Unbelievers, whether of the one sort or the other, have no title to them. The prophetic threatenings against the enemies of the Messiah put this beyond question.

2. The names of *Judah*, *Israel*, or *Zion*, according to the prophetic style, are applicable to all the true people of God and of the Messiah, whether Jews or Gentiles: though the majority of the Jewish nation did not embrace the true Messiah, many myriads of them did embrace him.* The converted Gentiles were to be considered as incorporated with the true Jewish Church, or true Zion.

3. It is also suitable to the prophetic style, that the name of *safety*, as well as *salvation*, should be given to that state of true blessedness into which the Messiah was to bring his people, and in which he will keep them,

* The words in Acts xxi. 20, rendered *many thousands*, are, in the Greek, *many myriads*.

notwithstanding their liableness to outward trials, which he makes very useful to them, and truly subservient to their safety, in the highest sense of the word. This is evident from the strain of prophetic instructions and expressions, in the passages which prove, that it was a spiritual salvation and happiness that the Messiah was to bestow on his people. Some expressions, which, at first view, seem to signify, in the most literal sense, temporal safety or prosperity, easily admit another and higher meaning: as in Jer. xxiii. 6, when speaking of the righteous branch raised to David, it is said, that "in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely," the words rendered *dwell safely*, may be rendered *dwell in confidence*, so as to relate to the superior spiritual privileges of the Gospel-church.

4. Wherever there are such expressions as cannot be reasonably explained otherwise than as relating to times of outward safety, as God has frequently vouchsafed such times to the Messiah's people, it is evident, that those times, as well as times of persecution, were proper subjects of prediction: and if there are some predictions of that kind that are not fully accomplished as yet, this is no objection against the evidence arising from such as are accomplished.

5. But besides all this, it deserves particular consideration, that many comfortable promises in the prophetic writings are designed for supporting the sincere servants of God, who had a far greater concern about the preservation of the true religion in the world, than about the mere temporal safety of their own nation. To such men it must have been the most sensible affliction, to see, or hear of, those dangers that seemed to threaten the total extinction of true religion, and the extirpation of God's church. It is evident, that when true religion was to be

extended to the Gentile nations, far and near, though sometimes persecuted even in many parts at once, it was still in a state of far greater safety, or farther removed from all probable danger of extinction, than when of old confined, in a great measure, to one country, which was frequently on the point of being swallowed up by powerful adversaries. This distinguishing advantage of the true religion in the times of the Messiah, may, in part, explain the prophetic expressions about the safety of Israel under his reign.

Sect. IV. *Of Isaiah's Prophecies.*

As the prophet Isaiah has been styled by some, by way of eminence, *the Evangelical Prophet*, on account of his many and clear predictions of the Messiah, it may show how justly that title hath been given him, if we consider that of sixty-six chapters, into which his book is divided, about forty contain prophecies of one kind or other on that subject; several of which chapters treat wholly of it; and in some parts of this book, we find, in several contiguous chapters, a continued series of prophecies, relating either to the Messiah's person, his church, or his enemies. As Isaiah, and his formerly-mentioned cotemporaries, lived about the time of the declension of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, it gives light to their predictions, to have in view the chief events of the history of those times, relating both to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and the chief neighbouring nations.

With respect to the history of the kingdom of Israel, it is needful to distinguish between the invasion of that kingdom by Tiglath-pileser, who conquered the more northern parts of it, Galilee, Naphtali, and Zebulun, and

carried away captive many inhabitants of those parts, (which partial captivity seems to be referred to, Isaiah ix. 1,) and the more general calamity brought on Israel by the Assyrians afterward, when they led captive the whole ten tribes, and planted strangers in their room.

Concerning the history of Judah in those times, it is proper to observe, 1st, That wickedness of all sorts, and particularly idolatry, came to a great height among that people, especially in the days of Ahaz and Manasseh. 2dly, That though the Assyrians did not utterly destroy Judah, as they did the ten tribes; yet they brought several grievous calamities on them, particularly in the days of Hezekiah and Manasseh. 3dly, That the kings of Israel and Syria, though they did not succeed in their attempts on Judah at the time mentioned, Isaiah vii. and 1 Kings xvi.; yet they made extraordinary slaughter on the people of Judah in the time of the same king Ahaz; as we find in 2 Chron. xvi. 5, 6.

As to the nations bordering on Judah, though God, for just and wise ends, forbade the Jews to seek protection from Egypt, they obstinately disobeyed that divine command, and were remarkably punished for their disobedience; as we read Isaiah xxxi. And it is needful to observe, that the Assyrians, and afterwards the Babylonians, were instrumental in bringing extraordinary judgments on Egypt, the Syrians, the Tyrians, and the Moabites; and as to several of them, their names were extinguished, and their people confounded with the Assyrians, who subdued them.

The first chapter of Isaiah consists of practical instructions, concerning the necessity of repentance, and various motives and encouragements to it.

The prophecy in the second chapter, as was observed

above, is one of those prophecies of the Messiah which stand by themselves, detached from all other subjects; and it foretells clearly, that the nations of the Gentiles "would flow unto Zion;" that they "would seek after and embrace the knowledge of the true God;" and that he "would judge or rule among them."

The third chapter contains an account of national sins, and national judgments, the fruits of these sins.

And in the fourth chapter, the first verse of which is reckoned, by good interpreters, a continuation of the threatenings in the former against the daughters of Zion, it is foretold at the beginning of a new prediction, that the Branch of the Lord should be beautiful and glorious for them that should escape of Israel; which cannot be otherwise explained than by applying it to the Messiah, (so often called the Branch in other prophecies,) considered as the consolation of God's people, and the foundation of their hope and joy in the greatest distresses.

The fifth chapter treats of the distinguishing privileges God had bestowed on the Jews as his vineyard, of their ungrateful returns, and the just punishment of their ingratitude, without any circumstance that can restrict these threatenings to the Babylonish captivity, so as to exclude the final dispersion of that people by the Romans; yea, the threatenings concerning God's vineyard seem most applicable to that last desolation, because it was then, and not till then, that God's vineyard was transplanted from among the Jews, and planted among the Gentiles. Compare Matth. xxi. 41.

And whereas the sixth chapter contains threatenings much of the same kind with those in the former chapter, concerning the rejection of the obstinate Jews, the expression in ver. 3. *The whole earth is full of his glory* affords an argument, that the prediction relates chiefly

to the times of the enlightening of the Gentile world; seeing it then only could be said, that the knowledge of God's glory filled the earth.

The predictions of the Messiah contained in the seventh and two following chapters, are mixed with such other subjects as those formerly mentioned in the general remarks on the contexts where such predictions are found. The first part of the seventh chapter contains a promise of the preservation of Judah from the attempts then made against that people by the Kings of Israel and Syria, together with a threatening, that the kingdom of Israel should be overthrown within sixty-five years. The second part of the chapter contains threatenings of calamities to be brought on Judah by the same Assyrians, who were to destroy Israel. Between these predictions comes in the promise of Immanuel, which the New Testament applies to the Messiah, as born of a virgin. How suitable it was to mix promises of the Messiah with those other subjects of this chapter, is evident from the former general remarks on the various chief subjects of prophecy. This tended to confirm God's promise to Judah of special protection in the midst of dangers that seemed to threaten utter ruin; and in proposing the promise of the Messiah as the best preservative against despondency, it was still needful to warn Judah, that notwithstanding that promise, their apostacy should not pass unpunished.

The same general observations are also applicable to the passages relating to the Messiah in the eighth chapter. In the first part of that chapter, it is foretold, that the Assyrian would hasten to the prey, (for that is the meaning of *Maher-shalal hash-baz*,) and would take away the wealth of Syria and Israel, and would also overspread the land of Judah, which is called, ver. 8, *Immanuel's land.* It was needful for the people of Judah to

know, that notwithstanding their peculiar interest in the promise of Immanuel, their sins should be chastised; and to know also, that notwithstanding these chastisements, they should be preserved from utter ruin, for the sake of *Immanuel.* It is of importance to observe the proofs we have in this context, that Immanuel was the foundation of Judah's safety from the total ruin they might apprehend. Whereas, in ver. 8, the prophet speaks expressly of the Assyrians as overspreading the land of Immanuel, upon mention of that joyful name he appears inspired with new life and vigour, and bids defiance to the enemies who threatened Judah with destruction, ver. 9 and 10. The prophet's triumphant expressions amount, in effect, to this, "Your pernicious counsels against Judah shall be brought to nought, for the sake of our Immanuel," (for that word is in the original in ver. 10, as well as ver. 8, though it is in ver. 8, a proper noun, and translated in ver. 10, as an appellative.) In both these chapters, as well as in other prophecies, it is intimated, that though both Judah and Israel should meet with great desolations from the Assyrians, yet there should be a vast difference betwixt the calamities of these two different nations; those of Judah would by no means be so destructive, nor so irrecoverable, as the other. For understanding ver. 13, it is needful to observe, that Ahaz the King of Judah had made a sinful confederacy with the King of Assyria, for defending himself from the Kings of Syria and Israel. The prophet, in condemning this confederacy, teaches, that Judah should make the Lord of hosts the object both of their hope and fear; which exhortation, compared with other prophecies, may reasonably be understood to require them to trust in the mercy of God through Immanuel; especially considering the arguments formerly mentioned in the general view

taken of predictions relating to the *unbelief of the Jews*, to shew, that this context relates to the Messiah, of whom it is here said, that when he should be a *stone of stumbling* to both houses of Israel, he should be *a sanctuary* to some other people, who can be no other but the Gentiles. Thus is the gospel-application of the name of *Immanuel* to the Messiah confirmed by the different parts of this 8th chapter, as well as of the 7th.

As it is of the tribe or kingdom of Judah that the prophet speaks more directly from chap. viii. 12, all along to the close; so the end of the chapter foretells a desolation coming on that kingdom, to which the prophet gives the name of *darkness*; and both this prediction and the beginning of the ninth chapter, which is a continuation of it, may be paraphrased thus: "Though, for just reason, God will bring great darkness, or desolation, on the kingdom of Judah; yet it will not be so great and irrecoverable as was brought on the kingdom of Israel when first the Assyrians carried away captive Zebulun and Naphtali, and afterwards, by the way of those northern places, gradually brought about a total desolation of that kingdom. These same places who suffered first that desolation, or darkness, from heathen oppressors, when inhabited in after ages by the remnant of Judah, and some Israelites mixed with them, shall see the glorious light of Immanuel. God will add to the number of his Zion; will he not also add to her joy, and increase her privileges, as well as enlarge her bounds? God's Zion or church shall obtain a glorious victory over her incorrigible adversaries, like the ancient victory over the Midianites, who were defeated by so unlikely means, as holding out of lights, and blowing of trumpets. God will conquer Zion's enemies in a way different from the way of other conquerors. They fight battles full of con-

fused noise, and men's garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with fuel of fire; for it is by Immanuel that this shall be brought about. I have named once and again this child as the support and foundation of our hope in the most threatening dangers: I prophesy of him now again as a child: His name shall be called, *Wonderful, Counsellor*, etc.: He shall be a divine person incarnate, etc. God's promise to our fathers, that the everlasting kingdom should be established in the house of David, shall be accomplished in this child. The revolutions and disasters I have been foretelling seem to contradict that promise; but they do not; for they shall not hinder its accomplishment. This Prince of peace shall reign on the throne of David for ever."

The latter part of this 9th chapter also proves the disparity between the calamities of Judah and of Israel: for it consists almost wholly of threatenings against the kings of Syria and Israel, who were at that time Judah's most formidable enemies. These threatenings against Judah's enemies were real promises of safety to the people of Judah themselves: though it is said, ver. 21, that Israel would be against Judah, yet it is not said, that they should overcome Judah.

Whereas, in chap. x., beside some practical instructions, the chief subject of prophecy insisted on is the downfall of the Assyrian empire, the threatenings against the Assyrians are mixed with promises to Judah, which have a near affinity to those contained in the preceding chapter. To make this evident, it is sufficient to make the following remarks: 1st. Whereas the Assyrian is represented in verse 11, as boasting what he would do to Judah or Samaria, the context shews, that this boasting should be groundless; and that there should be a great difference betwixt the success of the Assyrian against

Judah, and his success against the other tribes; see ver. 12. Afterwards in ver. 27, when it is foretold that God would deliver Judah from the Assyrian, it is said expressly, that it should be because of the *anointing; His burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.* The *anointing* here mentioned is not particularly described, which makes the prediction more obscure: yet this same want of particular description is an argument, that the expression relates to that to which the anointing is applicable by way of eminence: and the whole strain of prophetic characters of the Messiah, and of prophetic doctrine concerning him, shews, that it is to him that this is chiefly applicable; especially seeing this passage speaks of an anointing that was the foundation of Judah's safety, and of her interest in the peculiar care and protection of Providence.

The 11th and 12th chapters were formerly proved at large to contain clear predictions concerning the Messiah as the seed of Jesse, to whom the Gentiles would seek, whose rest should be glorious, who would judge or rule among the nations, filling the earth with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea, and making known in all the earth what excellent things God had done.

From the 13th chapter to the 24th, we have a series of prophecies concerning the revolutions that would befall the kingdoms of Babylon, Moab, Syria, Israel, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Tyre; and, in the midst of other subjects, predictions, not only of the conversion of Ethiopia, Tyre, and Egypt, but also of the conversion of Assyria; which last event, if we take Assyria in its fullest extent, may comprehend the several nations which had been swallowed up by that great empire, and confounded with it.

Though the prediction of extraordinary revolutions continued in chap. xxiv. be of that more general kind which was formerly mentioned; yet, amidst those revolutions, express mention is made of a time when men "should hear from the utmost ends of the earth, *Glory to the righteous;*" which gives ground to suppose, that the prophet has in view the happy times when the utmost ends of the earth should see the salvation of God; especially if we consider, that the three last verses of the chapter shew that the prophet speaks of the time when the Lord would, in a singular manner, defeat the powers that opposed his kingdom on earth, to the end that the Lord might reign in Zion.

Though the predictions in the beginning of chap. xxv. are general; yet it is evident, that they relate to such revolutions among the more powerful nations of the earth, as would be subservient to that great design mentioned in ver. 3, of bringing the strong and terrible nations to fear and glorify the true God; which supposes their being enlightened in the true knowledge of him. In the sequel of the chapter, we have more clear predictions concerning the enlightening of the Gentile nations; foretelling, "that God would make a feast in Mount Zion for all people; and would destroy the covering and the vail that was spread over all nations; and that God would swallow up death in victory, take away the rebuke of his people from off all the earth, and subdue his incorrigible enemies."

Whereas the 26th chapter consists chiefly of practical instructions concerning the true people of God, what is prophetical in that chapter, as was observed formerly, points at the privileges purchased by the mediation of the Messiah; and particularly the resurrection of the dead, (which had been hinted at in the former chapter,

in the promise of *swallowing up death in victory*), verse 19. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust."

The 27th chapter begins with that sort of general predictions which we meet with in several other prophecies, as particularly, in chap. xxiv. and xxxiv., which foretell the downfall of the enemies of Zion in general. These predictions concerning Zion's enemies are here mixed with promises of God's taking such special care of his vineyard, that "he would make Jacob at last to blossom and bud," so as to "fill the face of the world with fruit;" which, compared with other prophetic expressions, implies filling the earth with the knowledge of the true God.

In the 28th chapter, the rebukes first directed against Ephraim, or Israel, are extended afterwards to Judah, who are threatened for taking wrong ways of refuge and safety, particularly for what is called "making a covenant with death and hell." These expressions, when compared with the 8th chapter of this prophecy, and with 2 Kings xv. are supposed by interpreters to relate to the false means of relief, or false foundations of hope and safety, which the people of Judah then relied on. In opposition to these false foundations of hope and safety, the Lord describes the true foundation of Zion's safety by such characters as are applicable only to the Messiah, according to the whole strain of prophetic instructions concerning him. This passage receives light by being compared with what was formerly observed on the 7th and 8th chapters.

It was proved before that the 29th chapter foretells a siege and destruction of Jerusalem that should be contemporary with an inexcusable and extraordinary blind-

ness of the Jews, and a glorious enlightening of the Gentiles; which would make them the true spiritual "seed of Jacob, fearing the true God, and sanctifying and honouring his name, and making his church to rejoice."

The 30th chapter contains threatenings against those who disobeyed God by seeking shelter in Egypt; but these threatenings are mixed with joyful declarations of God's mercy to Zion, and followed with a description of blessed times, containing characters that appear peculiarly applicable to the times of the Messiah, according to the account of those times in other more clear predictions. The prophet speaks here of times when Zion should receive such marks of God's favour as would give her cause *to weep no more;* "when Zion's light should be greatly increased," ver. 26.; when the Lord would bind up the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound; when Zion's enemies should meet with a singular overthrow, and Zion herself abound in joyful songs; and when the Lord would cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shew the lighting down of his arm." Though the 31st and following verses speak of the downfall of the Assyrians; yet the descriptions of Zion's joy and happiness in the preceding context shew, that the prediction is not to be restricted merely to that event, but must relate to others of greater importance.

The beginning of the 32d chapter describes the reign of a king who would be very eminent in righteousness and goodness, of whom it is said, ver. 2, "that he would be as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Though we should suppose this description to be in a lower sense applicable to Hezekiah; yet it is far more applicable to the Messiah, and has a singular conformity with the pro-

phetic characters in other places, of his kingly office, and the benefits resulting from it; and the latter part of the chapter speaks of the "time when the Spirit would be poured out from on high, and when the wilderness should be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest;" which expressions, as was observed formerly, agree with the expressions in other prophecies concerning the enlightening of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the unbelieving Jews.

The 33d chapter foretells the deliverance wrought for Zion in the days of Hezekiah from the cruelty of Sennacherib. But with this particular prediction the prophet mixes those general principles concerning God's special care of Zion, which in other places are mixed with predictions of the Messiah.

The 34th chapter resembles the 24th, in denouncing general threatenings against the enemies of the kingdom of God, and in being followed with clear predictions of the enlightening of the Gentile nations; which event is expressed in the 35th chapter, "by God's making the wilderness to blossom as the rose, to rejoice with joy and singing, seeing the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." The sequel of that chapter contains predictions formerly explained, concerning the miracles that confirmed the gospel, the way of holiness revealed by it, and the everlasting joy of the redeemed of the Lord founded upon it.

Whereas the 36th and three following chapters of Isaiah are chiefly historical, the chapters following that history may be considered as a second part of this prophetic book, containing more full and clear predictions of the Messiah than the first.

The 40th chapter contains clear predictions concerning the Messiah's forerunner, who was to prepare the way

for him, by preaching in the desert; concerning the Messiah himself, as coming to Zion, feeding his flock like a shepherd, enlightening the Gentile nations, and revealing the glory of the Lord, so as all flesh should see it together. As to the subjects mixed with these predictions, there is not the least mention of the Babylonish captivity or the return from it, from the beginning to the end of the chapter. When Zion and Jerusalem are commanded to lift up their voice with strength, in order to publish glad tidings, it is not said, that they were to do this, to publish the return from captivity, but in order to say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God;" and then it is added, "Behold the Lord God will come;—he shall feed his flock like a shepherd," etc. The other subjects in this chapter are such as were formerly mentioned in the general remarks on prophetic contexts, such as promises of singular comfort to Jerusalem, and reasonings concerning the glory of the God of Israel, and the vanity of idols.

In the 41st chapter, there is a prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles in figurative expressions; ver. 18: "I will make the wilderness a pool of water—I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the myrtle," &c. Several arguments for understanding these expressions, as meant of the conversion of the Gentiles, may be gathered from other predictions, where the same figures are made use of, mixed with other more clear expressions, which determine the meaning of them. The other contents of this chapter are predictions concerning the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, the downfall of Zion's enemies in general, with instructions concerning the vanity of idols, and the glory of the God of Israel, particularly as to his foreknowledge. The manner in which the prediction about Cyrus is brought in near the begin-

ning of the chapter, requires particular consideration. The chapter begins with an exhortation to the nations to attend to the great works which the prophet was to speak of in the name of God, viz., God's raising up Cyrus to make so wonderful a conquest; "his giving the nations before him; giving them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow." In ver. 4. the nations are required to consider that these revolutions were the works of God: "who hath wrought and done it? I the Lord the first, and with the last, I am he." Then, after some instructions about the folly of idolatry, the prophet, from ver. 10 to 20, exhorts Zion not to despair, but to trust in God, assuring her of the downfall of her incorrigible enemies. It is on the back of such assurances that we have the above-mentioned figurative prediction of the conversion of the Gentile nations, suitably to the general remarks formerly made on the prophetic connections. The last part of this chapter from ver. 21. contains a defiance to the heathen images to evidence their divinity, as the God of Israel did, by foretelling future events.

As this context contains very magnificent commendations of the foreknowledge of the true God, manifested by his predictions, this is evidently a very suitable transition to the principal subject of inspired prophecy in the next chapter, which was formerly proved to contain some of the clearest and fullest predictions of the Messiah in all the Old Testament. It speaks not only of the Messiah as one who "was to bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, who would make the isles to wait for his law, who would be a covenant to the people and a light to the Gentiles, making the wilderness to sing and rejoice, and causing men to give glory to God in the islands, or in the parts separated from Judah by the sea;" but it

contains also predictions concerning the Messiah's manner of life, concerning his being rejected by the Jews, and the sad consequences of their rejecting him.

The 43d chapter contains a prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles in figurative expressions, resembling those formerly mentioned in chap. xli. 18. In this 43d chapter, it is said, ver. 19—22, "Behold, I will do a new thing;—I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls.—This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel," etc. Seeing, in prophetic figures, the Gentile world is called the wilderness, it is natural that the Gentiles themselves should be compared to the creatures that inhabit the wilderness. The 21st verse speaks of those inhabitants of the wilderness as a people God hath formed for himself, to shew forth his praise; and the following context, as was formerly proved, contains hints at the unbelief and rejection of the Jews. As to the other contents of this chapter, it begins with the usual exhortation to Jacob, not to fear, but to trust in God; and then, after some instructions concerning the vanity of images, as absolutely unable to give any evidence of their divinity, it is foretold, that God would bring down Babylon for the sake of Zion, who is directed to strengthen her faith of this new deliverance, by remembering the ancient deliverance from Egypt, when God made a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters. It is on the back of this that the forecited prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles is brought in with a solemn introduction, implying, that what the prophet was going to foretell, was so wonderful a divine work, that it would in a manner

eclipse former wonders. So that this transition may be justly paraphrased thus: "Though the deliverance from Babylon, which I am promising to you, and the deliverance from Egypt through the Red sea, of which I am reminding you, were glorious divine works; yet what I am now to foretell next, is a new thing, in comparison of which former works shall not be remembered."

The 44th chapter contains at least some hints relating to the times of the Messiah; since it not only speaks, in ver. 3, of the time of pouring down God's Spirit, and blessing more abundantly than formerly, but of pouring down spiritual blessings on the dry ground. And the 5th and 6th verses seem most naturally applicable to a new people, viz. the Gentiles, who had not formerly acknowledged the true God, now subscribing to the Lord, and surnaming themselves by the God of Jacob. As to the other contents of this chapter, it begins with the usual exhortations to God's church not to fear, because he would help her. The following part of the chapter, after the prediction just now cited, contains nervous arguments of the madness of idolaters, who made use of one part of the same timber to prepare their meat, and made another part of it an object of worship. The last part of this chapter contains a most glorious promise of remission, or of blotting out sins as clouds; which promise is proposed as a motive to enforce an exhortation to Israel, to return to God as their Redeemer; and then follows a magnificent prediction concerning the redemption of Israel, or of God's people, which would be just matter of universal joy and singing through heaven and earth. Though at the distance of five verses after this, the deliverance by Cyrus is foretold, it does not follow, that that is the redemption of Israel mentioned above, as will appear, if we consider

how the prediction concerning Cyrus is brought in. To set this in a clear light, the last seven verses of this chapter may be paraphrased thus, as will appear to any who considers this whole context. "O Israel, the promise of remission of sin, and of a glorious redemption, that shall make heaven and earth sing; this promise is made to thee by that God who first formed thee, O Jacob, or first formed a church in the world; by that God who made all things, who frustrateth the vain arts of the worshippers of images; by that God who fulfils all his promises faithfully, and who promises to restore the Jews by Cyrus." So that the prediction concerning Cyrus is brought in as one of those many works of God which should make Israel rely on his word, and particularly on his promise of that redemption which would be ground of universal joy and singing in heaven and earth.

Whereas the 45th chapter contains the fullest and clearest predictions, two remarkable things are affirmed concerning the ends of providence in these conquests, viz. 1*st*, That they should be brought about for the sake of Israel; and, 2*dly*, That they should be subservient to God's glorious design of enlightening the Gentile nations. In the sequel of the chapter, after some important instructions concerning the glory of the God of Israel, in respect of his power and foreknowledge, we have a variety of predictions relating to the Messiah, his church, and his enemies; shewing particularly, that, in after ages, even the people of Egypt and Ethiopia, together with the Sabeans, would join themselves to Zion, and say to her, Surely God is in thee, and there is none else, no other God; that idolatry should be abolished; that Israel should be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; that all the ends of the earth should look to

the Lord in order to be saved; that every knee should bow to him, and every tongue swear; that men should own that it is in the Lord they have righteousness and strength; that they should come to him; that his enemies, or those that would be incensed against him, should be ashamed; that in him all the seed of Israel (which, according to the prophetic style, comprehends the converted Gentiles) should be justified and should glory. These things shew, that whereas the chapter begins with a prediction concerning Cyrus, the sequel contains a continuation of the history of the church of God, from her return from captivity, to the time of the conversion of all nations.

As the 46th, and two following chapters, treat at large of the downfall of Babylon, and the deliverance of God's people from the Babylonish captivity, these chapters are followed with one of the fullest prophecies in all the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, chap. xlix. To shew, that the distance of time betwixt the return from captivity and the time of the Messiah, is no objection against the Christian interpretation of the 49th chapter, it is proper to observe, that at the close of the 48th chapter, while the prophet looks forward to the deliverance from Babylon, he looks back to the ancient deliverance from Egypt, ver. 21: so far is it from being unsuitable to the prophetic way of writing, to join descriptions of very distant events in contiguous passages. But what we are chiefly to observe, as to the relation which the 49th chapter has to the foregoing predictions, is the manifold relation of the deliverance from Babylon to the deliverance by the Messiah, as formerly explained, and (which is particularly to be remembered) that the history of the times of the Messiah is a real continuation

of the history of the church, after her return from captivity.

It was proved before, at good length, that this 49th chapter contains large predictions concerning the Messiah, as one who would enlighten the Gentiles, though he was to be rejected by the Jews: here it is foretold, that Israel would not be gathered to him, but that he should spend his strength and labour, in a great measure, in vain, among that nation; that he should be despised by them; that he should be given for a covenant to the people, for a light to the Gentiles; that even the kings and queens of the Gentiles should arise and worship, and should become nursing fathers to Zion; that Zion should be amazed at the number of new children crowding into her, after losing in a great measure, her former children, the unbelieving Jews. It is fit to observe, that there is not any mention of the return from Babylonish captivity in all this chapter: for as to the figurative expressions in ver. 9, 24, 25, about delivering prisoners and captives, it was proved before, that these expressions are often applied to spiritual deliverances; and the whole strain of predictions, and other instructions, in this chapter, show, that that must be the meaning of these expressions in those passages.

Whereas it is said to the Jews, in the 1st verse of the 50th chapter, "For your transgressions is your mother put away," there is nothing in the context to restrict this passage to the Babylonish captivity; it seems rather more applicable to the final rejection of the Jews, after their rejection of the Messiah, in the times of the gospel; which are the times treated on, both in the foregoing and following prophecies. The description of sufferings in ver. 6, hath a remarkable conformity with the predictions concerning the Messiah's sufferings in chap. lii. and

elsewhere; and the triumphant expressions in the following context, imply, that the sufferer here spoken of was to overcome his enemies, notwithstanding the injuries he was to suffer from them: it is obvious, that this is more applicable to the Messiah than to Isaiah himself. If it seem difficult to make out the connection, supposing the prediction to relate to the Messiah, it is rather more difficult to make it out in applying the prediction to Isaiah, the foregoing and following prophecies speaking nothing about Isaiah, but a great deal about the Messiah.

That the 51st chapter treats of the times of the Messiah, appears from ver. 4 and 5, where it is said, that "a law shall proceed from him, and that he will make his judgment to rest for a light of the people;—that the isles shall wait upon him, and that on his arm they shall trust."

The other parts of this chapter contain general gracious promises, "that God would comfort Zion; that he would make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; and that he would comfort all her waste places;" where we may observe, that building waste places is applicable, in a spiritual sense, to the times of the Messiah, as well as in a more literal sense, to the times after the return from captivity. The latter part of the chapter contains earnest prayers, that God would exert his power in behalf of his church, to carry her safely through all difficulties, as when "of old he made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over;" with various and comfortable instructions, implying, that such prayers should be heard.

The three last verses of the 52d chapter, were formerly proved to contain predictions, both of the Messiah's sufferings and his subsequent exaltation, and to be really

a part of the clear prediction contained in the following 53d chapter. In the first part of this 52d chapter, the captive daughter of Zion is exhorted "to awake and put on strength; to loose herself from the bonds of her neck;" which expression seems to refer to the deliverance from captivity. To shew the connection of purposes in the different parts of this chapter, it is sufficient to refer to the general remarks formerly made.

The 53d, and three following chapters, contain a series of clear predictions of the Messiah; setting forth the several chief branches, both of the history and doctrine of the gospel, particularly concerning the Messiah's sufferings, the causes and fruits of them, his death, his exaltation, the unbelief and dispersion of the Jews, the conversion of the Gentiles, the excellency of the blessings of God's covenant, and the privileges which he would bestow on his people in his house, when it should be called a house of prayer for all people. In all these chapters, there is no mention made of the Babylonish captivity, or the return from it, abstracting from some figurative expressions, which seem to allude to those events.

The 57th, and two following chapters, contain a variety of the most important practical instructions; and at the end of the 59th chapter there is a clear prediction concerning the conversion of the Gentile nations, following immediately after a general threatening against God's enemies, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, "He will repay recompence to his enemies, to the islands he will repay recompence. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun." And then it is added, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion.—This is

my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth," etc.

From the 60th chapter to the end of this book, there is a great number of predictions relating to the times of the Messiah, without any intermixture, at least any considerable intermixture, of predictions relating to other matters: so that there is not the same occasion here, as in considering former parts of this book, to make remarks on subjects with which the predictions of the Messiah are mixed. It is sufficient to point out some of the clearest predictions in these chapters on that important subject, such as the following: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.—The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.—The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee; the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.—Thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of kings.—The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.—Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence!—To make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence.—For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, etc., what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.—I am sought of them that asked not for me: I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my

hands all the day unto a rebellious people.—Ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.—Where is the house that ye build unto me?—To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit.—He that sacrificeth a lamb, is as if he cut off a dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood: he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol.—Who hath heard such a thing?—Shall a nation be born at once: for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.—Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream.—I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them, unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my name, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles."

Sect. V. *Of Jeremiah's prophecies.*

In the third chapter of Jeremiah, ver. 15, 16, 17, we have a prediction, not only of the future abolishing of the Levitical service, implied in the abolishing of the ancient regard shewn to the ark of the covenant, but also of the conversion of the Gentiles, implied in the "gathering of all nations to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem, so that they would not walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. Though both these events are said to happen after the return from the captivity, so as to be a continuation of the his-

tory of the church, after that return; yet they are not said to happen immediately after it, but at a considerable distance, after the small remnant, called, ver. 14, *one of a city, and two of a family,* should be *multiplied and increased in the land.* The words at the close of ver. 16, rendered, *Neither shall that be done any more,* may be rendered, *Neither shall any more sacrifice be offered there.** But, without this, the other expressions in that text contain a prediction, that the ceremonial service was to be abolished. There are two chief subjects with which these predictions relating to the times of the Messiah are mixed; first, Promises of restoration from captivity; and, secondly, Promises of pastors after God's own heart; which subjects we meet with afterwards in other passages concerning the Messiah, in this prophecy. The predictions both about the abolishing of the ceremonial law, and the enlightening of the Gentiles, are contained in promises directed to Israel, (as distinguished from Judah), ver. 14, of restoration from captivity; but in ver. 18, we have a promise of a joint return of Israel and Judah. Whereas some apply both these promises to the second and final restoration of the Jews yet to come, which they suppose will be previous to the conversion of all nations, or the fulness of the Gentiles; whatever way we understand these promises about the restoration of the Jews from captivity or dispersion, it cannot annul the evidence of the chief predictions in view, viz. those relating to the abolishing of the ceremonial law, and the conversion of the Gentiles, begun by the calling or gathering of many nations, and completed by *the gathering of all nations to the name of the Lord.*

In the sixteenth chapter of this prophecy, we have another clear prediction of the conversion of the Gen-

* See Mr. Lowth on the place.

tiles, in these words: "O Lord, my strength, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?" The subjects with which this prediction is mixed here, as well as the like predictions in other places, are threatenings of just punishment to be inflicted on the Jews, a gracious promise of their restoration, and commendations of that future restoration, as what would make the deliverance from Egypt not to be remembered.

In the twenty-third chapter, there is a comprehensive prediction of the Messiah, as the righteous Branch to be raised unto David, ver. 5, 6, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice on the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, *The Lord our righteousness.*" There is here a considerable complication of the prophetic characters of the Messiah, relating to the singular dignity of his person, his kingly office, his benefits, and his descent from David, together with that uncommon title, so oft appropriated to him, *The Branch:* so that various proofs of the Messiah's being meant in this prediction may be drawn from the several other predictions, where he is called, *The Lord, God's righteousness and salvation, Zion's righteous King, in whom she has righteousness, and strength, and safety.*

Though the enlightening of the Gentiles is not mentioned here, as in the two former passages, it is proper to observe some things wherein these three coincide with one another, as well as with several other predictions. In the 3d chapter, the prediction of the conver-

sion of the Gentiles is mixed with promises of restoration from dispersion, and of God's giving pastors after his own heart. In the 16th chapter, the same prediction about the Gentiles is mixed with promises of the like future restoration, and commendations of it, as eclipsing, in some respect, the deliverance from Egypt. In this 23d chapter, the promise of the righteous Branch of David is mixed with promises of pastors that would feed God's flock, so as they should not be dismayed, after punishing the pastors that scattered them, and promises of restoration from dispersion, joined with commendations of that restoration, like what we had in the 16th chapter. And seeing it is after the promise of the Messiah, as saving and ruling Judah and Israel, that it is added, ver. 6, 7, that *therefore* the promised restoration shall be more remembered than the deliverance from Egypt, the most natural explication of this transition or connection is, " Because this promised restoration will put them under the government of the Messiah, or the Lord our righteousness, or because it will be subservient to that happiness, this is the thing that will give that restoration a pre-eminence even above the deliverance from Egypt."

There are many plain arguments against applying this prediction to Zerubbabel. He could not be called the Lord our righteousness. He was not a king, but a deputy governor under the king of Persia. He was not the deliverer of the Jews, but a delivered captive himself, like the rest of the Jews, delivered by Cyrus. The description of Zion's happiness, by " the Lord her righteousness," ill suits with the low afflicted state of Zion under Zerubbabel; and long after, Zechary, Zech. vi. who prophesied in the days of Zerubbabel, speaks of him *whose name is the Branch,* as one to come; and he

speaks of him, not only as a king, which Zerubbabel was not, but also as a priest, which Zerubbabel could not be while the Levitical law was in force, not being of the tribe of Levi.

It is the design of the 13th and of the three following chapters, not only to foretell the return from Babylon, but to give a joyful prospect of all the chief wonderful works of God's mercy towards his ancient people, from the time of that return until the remotest ages.

It is useful to begin with the prediction of the Messiah in the 33d chapter, because it is so evidently parallel to the last-explained prediction in the 23d; as will appear by ocular inspection.

Chap. xxiii. 5.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: And this is his name whereby he shall be called, *The Lord our Righteousness.*

Chap. xxxiii. 14.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform the good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah.

In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of Righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: And this is the name wherewith she shall be called, [or, as some render it, he who shall call her is] *The Lord our Righteousness.*

These two predictions agree almost in every thing. Though the name of *the Lord our Righteousness*, which in the first is given to the Branch of David, is in the second, by our translation, given to Jerusalem, or the church, the expressions which we render, "This is the name wherewith she shall be called," etc. are more liter-

ally rendered thus: "And he who shall call her is *the Lord our Righteousness.*" But though we follow the English translation, the name of *the Lord our Righteousness,* which belongs primarily to the Messiah, as appears both from the prophetic doctrine and style concerning him, can only be applied secondarily to his church, on account of her relation to him, as the name of the husband is given to the spouse, which, according to several prophecies, is in a spiritual sense the Messiah's relation to his church, Psa. xlv; Isa. liv, or as the names, *Jehova-nissi,* and *Jehova-shalom,* are given to altars, Exod. xvii. 15; Jud. vi. 24.

The 14th verse, which is the introduction to this prediction concerning the righteous Branch of David, shews, that the matter of this prediction is, by way of eminence, *the good thing promised to the fathers;* which is evidently a peculiar character of the Messiah, who is on several occasions spoken of, in the later prophecies, as made known to the church formerly in more ancient prophecies.

Both the prophecies in view renew the promise in Nathan's prophecy, of an extraordinary king of the house of David. And the perpetual continuance of his kingdom, which was foretold in so strong a manner by Nathan, is expressed in the like strong manner in this 33d of Jeremiah, ver. 20, 21, 26; where that ancient promise to David is declared to be as sure as God's covenant of the day and of the night.

What is said, in the same context, about the perpetual continuance of the Levites, is best explained by comparing it with the prophecies which foretell the abolishing of the ceremonial law, and describe the ordinances of gospel worship among the Gentiles, by expressions borrowed from the ancient rites of the Jews,

Mal. i. 11; Isa. xv. 6. And when it is said here, ver. 22, that the seed of David and the Levites should be multiplied as the host of heaven, and the sand of the sea, this is explained by other prophetic passages about the multiplication of the people or church of God, and consequently of his ministers, by the accession of the Gentiles; and the passages which speak of God's people as the seed of the Messiah, the mystical David, Isa. liii.

In the 30th chapter, ver. 9, after foretelling the return of the Jews from captivity, it is added, "They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them;" which David, as was formerly proved, must be the Messiah. And whereas the prediction in ver. 21, is applied by some interpreters to the Messiah, rather than to Zerubbabel, there are several things in the text that favour that interpretation. The word here rendered *their governor* signifies literally *their mighty one*, which coincides with peculiar titles of the Messiah in other predictions, as Psa. xlv. and lxxxix. The expressions here about that governor, as *approaching* and *drawing near to God*, are, in the Old Testament style, in a more particular manner applicable to the office of priests, as attending on God more immediately than others do. The solemn interrogation, "Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me?"* seems to denote some singularity in that approach to God which the prophet speaks of, which cannot be accounted for in applying the passage to Zerubbabel; but agrees well with the prophetic accounts of the Messiah's mediatory offices, particularly his priesthood, and his coming near to God, mentioned Daniel vii. 13. The last words of this chapter contain a remarkable hint, that

* See Mr. Lowth.

the subject of the preceding prediction would be best considered or understood *in the latter days,* which in the prophetic style are the days of the Messiah.

The 31st chapter, as was proved formerly, gives such an account of the new covenant, as implies the future abolishing of the ceremonial law. It contains also an intimation, that the Messiah should be born of a virgin. And the last words of the chapter shew, that the predictions it contains, not only extend to the time of the Messiah's coming, but to the more remote ages of his kingdom, even the times of the second and final restoration of the Jews, when Jerusalem should be rebuilt, so as "not to be plucked up or thrown down any more for ever."

Sect. VI. *Of Ezekiel's prophecies.*

Though the prophecy in the 17th of Ezekiel is expressly called a riddle, ver. 2; yet the explication of it, which begins at ver. 12, makes the several parts of it abundantly intelligible, and shews, that the end of the chapter contains a prediction of the Messiah as the seed of David, who should rise from a low condition to incomparable exaltation, as King in Zion, and universal ruler of God's people in all nations.

In the first part of the chapter, whereas the kings of Babylon and Egypt are compared to two eagles, the house of David, or royal family of Judah, is compared to a cedar; and a chief design of the parable is, to rebuke the king of Judah and his people for violating their oath to the king of Babylon, and for their sinful confederacy with the king of Egypt.

To shew, that the last part of the chapter, from ver. 22 to the close, is meant of the Messiah, it is sufficient

to consider the following things. Seeing the cedar here spoken of is the house of David, the tender branch of that cedar, mentioned ver. 22, must be a branch of that house. "Planting this branch in the mountain of the height of Israel" must, according to the prophetic style, imply the planting of it in Mount Zion. When it is said, that "under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing, in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell," it must signify, that all nations shall serve him, according to the prophetic explication of the like allegorical expressions, Daniel iv., xii., and xxvi. The character of universal dominion enjoyed by a King of the house of David, is a decisive proof, that it is the Messiah that is here meant. And this might be farther confirmed, by comparing this passage with others, where the Messiah is called *the Branch.* The branch raised to David, who was "to grow up as a tender plant,* and as a root out of a dry ground," and who was "to be cut off out of the land of the living."†

The 34th chapter contains a prediction concerning the Messiah, as the mystical David. And whereas that name is given to the Messiah, sometimes without calling him either a prince or shepherd; both these titles are given him here, ver. 23, 24, "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even *my servant David;* he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd: and I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a Prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it." As to the subjects with which this prediction is mixed, it resembles other remarkable predictions

* "I will crop off," etc. Ezek. xvii. 22, compared with Isa. liii. and Dan. ix.

† See also the expression, Isa. xxvii. 6, "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

of the Messiah, particularly those contained in Jer. xvi. and xxiii. in being mixed with threatenings against unfaithful shepherds; which may relate, not only to men of that character in the days of Ezekiel, but to others like them in the days of the Messiah, who are described in Isa. lvi. 11, as ignorant and covetous. But besides this, the context in view contains characters of the times of the Messiah, relating to the superior degrees of spiritual blessings, which in those times God would pour down on his church: "I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing, and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing." The whole chapter may justly be considered as an incomparable pastoral. The character of superior measures of spiritual blessings affords an argument for applying to the times of the Messiah, the chief predictions in the 36th chapter, particularly from ver. 25 to 33, shewing, that the prophet speaks of the time of pouring down the Spirit of God more plentifully than in former ages.

The 37th chapter contains a prediction, resembling that in the 34th, concerning the Messiah as the mystical David, ver. 23, 24, "I will be their God, and David my servant shall be King over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them." Whereas it is foretold in the last verse of this chapter, that "the heathen or the Gentiles should know, that God sanctified Israel, when his sanctuary should be in the midst of them evermore;" these words both contain a hint at the enlightening of the heathens or Gentiles, and an argument, that it is the second and final restoration of the Jews that is foretold.

In the three last verses of the first chapter of Ezekiel,

the prophet says, that in a vision of a glorious throne, he saw the appearance of a man on the throne; that the brightness about the throne resembled that of the rainbow; and that this was the appearance of the glory of the Lord. Whereas several interpreters are of opinion, that this relates to the Messiah, who was one day to assume the nature of man, the following things shew, in some measure, what good ground there is for that opinion. The glory of the Lord, which is here said to appear to the prophet, is the name given anciently to the Shechinah, or cloud of glory that covered the mercy-seat. As the rainbow was considered as a token of the covenant of peace made with Noah, the covenant of grace is compared to that covenant, Isa. liv. The Messiah is called *God's covenant and salvation*, and *the Messenger of the covenant.* The whole strain of prophetic doctrine concerning him shews, that he was the Mediator of the new covenant; and in other prophecies, he is said to be a King and Priest on his throne, and his throne to continue for ever and ever, Psa. xlv; Zech. vi.

Sect. VII. *Of Zephaniah's Prophecies.*

In the prophecy of Zephaniah, it is foretold, that God "would famish all the gods of the earth," Zeph. ii. 11, 12; plainly implying the abolishing of the idolatry of the heathens, and consequently the conversion of the heathen or Gentiles themselves; which is more directly asserted in the words immediately following: "And men shall worship him," every one "from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." It was observed formerly, that sometimes the same context contains threatenings of awful judgments to be inflicted, either on particular

Gentile nations, or on many, or on all the nations in general, and, together with these threatenings, gracious promises of the conversion of those nations. The context where the prediction in view is found is an instance of such a complication of promises and threatenings: for both the foregoing and following predictions relate to judgments to be inflicted on various nations, the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and Assyrians; yea, the very introduction to the promise of conversion is a threatening, that God would be terrible to the nations the prophet speaks of; and then it is added, that all their false gods should be famished, and themselves made to call on the true God. We have the like complication of promises and threatenings in the third chapter, where it is said, ver. 8, "My determination is, to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." And immediately after this threatening, it is added, "For then will I turn (or restore) to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering." When God's punishing the nations, whom he was also to convert, is ascribed to the "fire of his jealousy," that expression seems naturally applicable to God's regard to his glory, and the interests of true religion, so highly injured by the idolatry that had overspread the nations. Other things which serve to illustrate this mixing of promises of conversion with threatenings against the heathen nations, were observed formerly. It is a farther proof that this passage relates to the times of the Messiah, that the verse immediately following contains an inti-

mation of the abolishing of the ceremonial law: "Thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain." And the close of the chapter, from ver. 13, contains the characters of the times of the Messiah, relating to the superior happiness and purity of the church under his reign: "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity;—they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel, be glad, and rejoice with all the heart:—The King of Israel, even the Lord, in the midst of thee:—The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love." In the last two verses it is said, "I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord." This is not so applicable to the times immediately after the captivity, as to the times of the Messiah. Neither the Jews in general, nor the true people of God among them, were the objects of the esteem and praise of the Gentile nations, until these nations embraced the gospel, which proceeded first from that people.

Sect. VIII. *Of Habakkuk's Prophecies.*

The prophet Habakkuk, chap. i. 6; ii. 5, 8, after foretelling the success of the Chaldeans or Babylonians in his first chapter, and their downfal in the second, adds, in ver. 14, this general prediction, (which we find in more places than one elsewhere,) "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the

sea." It may in part remove the obscurity of the connection between this and the foregoing prediction, to remember, that the downfall of Babylon was subservient to the restoration of God's church, in order to her future enlargement by the conversion of the Gentiles, which is the thing that was to fill the earth with the knowledge of God. And though the fall of Babylon is the particular event foretold in the preceding context; yet the words, ver. 13, immediately preceding the promise of filling the earth with the knowledge of God, are capable of a more comprehensive meaning, so as to import the vanity of all the endeavours of the powers of the world, to establish lasting universal monarchies, and to extirpate God's church or kingdom, which is the only lasting kingdom, and should one day be of universal extent, when the knowledge of God should fill the earth.

Some interpreters apply to the Messiah the prediction in the beginning of the second chapter, from ver. 1 to 5, rendering the latter part of ver. 3 thus, (as the original will naturally admit,) "Though he tarry, expect him; because he that cometh will come, and will not go beyond," viz. the appointed time. This explication seems most suitable to the general doctrine in the next verse, "The just shall live by his faith;" seeing God's mercy in the Messiah was the great object of the church's faith and hope; and the commendation given of faith in this 4th verse seems designed as a motive to enforce the waiting enjoined in the former verse.* Though just men would believe the promised fall of Babylon, they could not be said to live by that faith. The solemnity of the introduction in ver. 2, prefixed to the prediction in ver. 3, seems more suitable to predictions of the greatest

* See Gal. v 5, about waiting by faith.

importance, such as those relating to the Messiah, "Write the vision, and make it plain on tables, that he may run that readeth it." These last words may be understood to imply, not more than ordinary clearness in the prediction, but uncommon importance. Supposing these words to relate to the prediction about the fall of Babylon, a little below, it is certain, that it is not more clear, but rather more obscure and general, than other predictions of the same event elsewhere. A thing may be supposed to be written plainly, or engraven on tablets, so as to be easily *read* and remembered, though not easily *understood*. And these words, "he may run that reads," seem more applicable to the short and comprehensive prediction in ver. 3 and 4, considered as a distinct prediction by itself, than to the sequel of the chapter. To all which it is proper to add, that "he who is to come" is a title peculiarly applicable to the Messiah; that it is suitable to the prophetic way of writing, on other occasions, to mix predictions of the Messiah with predictions of extraordinary calamities or deliverances; and that a promise of the Messiah in this place was a proper relief from hurtful impressions of the foregoing threatenings of calamities from the Babylonians, as well as a confirmation of the subsequent promises of the downfall of those enemies.

Sect. IX. *Of Haggai's Prophecies.*

In considering the various predictions relating to the time of the Messiah's coming, it was proved, at some length, that the second chapter of Haggai contained a clear prediction on that subject, Hag. ii. 7, shewing, that the Messiah, the desire of all nations, and the author of

the true peace of God's church, would come during the standing of the second temple ; and that his coming to it should be its greatest glory, surpassing all the honour that could redound to the first temple from the greatest prophets, priests, or kings, that had ever appeared in the church.

The 14th and 17th verses of this 2d chapter of Haggai, contain such accounts of the corrupt state of the Jews, in the times immediately after the return from Babylon, as show how unreasonable it is to apply to these times the most magnificent prophetic promises and descriptions of the purest and happiest times of the church of God on earth.

Though the following prediction in the four last verses of this chapter has some obscurity in it, there are several considerable arguments, which prove that, according to the true rules of interpretation, it must not be applied to Zerubbabel, personally considered, but as a type of the Messiah.

Not only Zerubbabel and Joshua were fit to typify the Messiah, in regard the one was the governor of God's people at that time, and all that they had for a king, as the other was their high priest; but in fact it is certain, from Zechariah, who was contemporary with Haggai, that they were actually considered as types of the Messiah in some predictions delivered to them.* As Solomon's building the divine temple made him a singular type of the Messiah, the like honourable work fitted Zerubbabel for the like representation. But besides Zerubbabel's work and office, we are to consider his relation to the Messiah, who was to descend from him. And both in scripture and other writings, things pro-

* See Zech. vi. 11, etc.

mised to men's posterity are considered as promised to themselves.

The words in ver. 21, about shaking heaven and earth, are an argument for considering the prediction which these words usher in, as parallel to the preceding prediction about the desire of all nations, which is by no means applicable to Zerubbabel. He could not be called the desire of all nations, whom so few nations knew, and whom a few inconsiderable neighbours despised and opposed, and opposed with so much success. He could not be mentioned as a person yet to come, after shaking heaven and earth, and all things. He could not be called the glory of the latter house, rendering it more honourable than the first house.

The future revolutions foretold in this second, as well as in the former prediction, are such as did not happen in the days of the literal Zerubbabel. The 22d and 23d verses compared shew, that the day when the Zerubbabel here meant should be made a signet, is the day when God would overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen. This must at least imply the destroying of the strength of the heathen kingdom, or great empire, of the Medes and Persians, (for that of Babylon was past, and cannot be here meant.) But this did not happen in the days of the literal Zerubbabel, nor long after. The words of this prediction, ver. 22, taken in their full latitude, denote the downfall, not only of the Persian, but of the other universal monarchies, whose downfall is foretold in Daniel as subservient to the establishing of the everlasting divine kingdom of the Messiah; which is a farther argument, that he is the subject of this prediction.

Sect. X. *Of Zechariah's Prophecies.*

In the first chapter of Zechariah, there is a remarkable vision of four horns, representing the powers that had scattered Judah and Israel, and of four carpenters who come to fray these horns, chap. i. 18, etc., representing instruments raised to break these powers; which vision has a remarkable conformity with Daniel's predictions concerning the four great monarchies, (reckoning the Babylonian the first), which are represented, first by the four parts of a great image, and then by four beasts.

The second chapter contains a prophecy, where the conversion of the Gentiles is foretold, in the clearest expressions, ver. 11, not by saying, that they would flow into Zion, or be joined to Zion, but that "many nations would be joined to the Lord, and be his people." The time when this should happen is represented as at a considerable distance, seeing it appears, from ver. 4, that it should be after Jerusalem was become exceeding populous; whereas, at the time of this prediction, it was at best but very thinly inhabited. The prophet speaks of the coming of the Lord to Zion, so as to dwell in it, in a new and peculiar manner, which would be just ground of unspeakable joy, as an event yet future, and that should happen about the time of the joining of many nations to the Lord, Gen. xlix. 10; so that in the compass of a few verses, we have here the mysterious combination of the characters of the Messiah's person, so oft mentioned formerly, as explicable only by the gospel doctrine of his divine nature, and voluntary condescension to a subordinate office. He is called the Lord, ver. 5 and 6, who says, that the Lord of hosts hath

sent him, ver. 9 and 11. This has a near affinity with what we have at the beginning of the next chapter, where he who is called the Lord is represented as interceding with the Lord in behalf of Joshua; who there represents the distressed church and people of God; and that intercession is in order to take away their filthy garments, and to procure them change of raiment.

That the prediction which begins at the eighth verse of this third chapter, is not meant of Zerubbabel, but of the Messiah, is evident; because the person here spoken of is he whose name is *The Branch*, which was proved to be one of the peculiar titles of the Messiah; and because it is said, *I will bring forth* my servant the Branch; whereas Zerubbabel was brought forth already. For removing the obscurity of what is here foretold concerning *the Branch*, it is useful to join together the following remarks. 1. The Messiah is, in other prophecies, compared to a stone, and is called a *precious stone*, a *foundation-stone*, a *head corner-stone*, a *stone cut out without hands;* and when he is called a *foundation* or *corner-stone*, it is in relation to the church of God, considered as a building, more particularly as a temple; for God is said, not only to dwell *with* his people, but *in* them. Figures borrowed from building were the more suitable at the time of this prediction, because then the building of God's temple was a chief thing that occupied the minds of his people. As oft-times the principal stones of buildings are adorned with carvings, possibly this prediction may contain an allusion to an hieroglyphical carving of seven eyes on one stone of the second temple. But what is said here about *one stone*, or, as the word may signify, a *principal stone*, on which seven eyes, Zech. iii. 9, should be engraven by God himself, is

best explained by what we have in the 4th chapter, ver. 2, about the seven lamps of the sacred golden candlestick; and ver. 10, "Those seven, they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth;"* with which scriptures it is useful to join (for explaining that expression, "I will engrave the graving thereof,") the scriptures which speak of the Messiah as adorned, in an incomparable manner, with the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, and of his undertaking, as promoted by the manifold dispensations of the all-ruling providence of God. The promise of *removing iniquity*, added to what is said about this mysterious engraving, is a farther confirmation that it relates to the Messiah.

When it is said, chap. iv. 10, *Who hath despised the day of small things?* it serves to shew how unreasonable it is to apply the most magnificent ancient predictions, concerning the future happiness of God's church, to the times of the return from Babylon. Though it was a day not to be despised, it was comparatively but a day of small things. What was observed on Haggai ii. 21, about things spoken to Zerubbabel as a type of the Messiah, shews, that what is called, "the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel," in this 4th chapter, from ver. 6, and downwards, however literally applicable to the building of the material temple, may also have a mystical relation to the spiritual building of God's temple by the Messiah; which is more clearly spoken of in the 6th chapter.

That the prediction which begins at the 12th verse of this 6th chapter, is meant, not of Zerubbabel, but of the Messiah, is evident from a variety of characters of the person and event described. The person here spoken of

* See Rev. i. 4, 12.

is one who was yet to grow, one who was yet to come; he is the man whose name is *the Branch.* The building of the temple by him is mentioned as a future event; whereas Zerubbabel's building was past, at least in part. When the expression is doubled, "He shall build the temple of the Lord, even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory," this singular magnificence of style naturally imports a more excellent future building that what then existed. "He shall bear the glory," is more applicable to the Messiah's honour in the spiritual building, than to Zerubbabel's honour, or any particular concern he had, in the material building. The building here foretold, is mentioned, ver. 15, as a work wherein they that were far off should be concerned; which is an intimation of the conversion of the Gentiles. He whose name is *the Branch,* was to be both a King and Priest on his throne; whereas Zerubbabel was neither the one nor the other. The two typical crowns are appointed to be set on the head, not of Zerubbabel, but of Joshua the high priest; these crowns were appointed to be delivered to the persons named, ver. 14, to be kept, and that in the temple of the Lord, to be a memorial of the use for which they were made; which could be no other, but to typify the royalty and priesthood of the great person who is the subject of this prediction. When, after mention of his twofold office, it is added, "and the counsel of peace shall be between them both," whether this be meant of the concurrence of God the Father and of the Branch, or of the two offices of the latter, either of these interpretations will confirm the application of the prediction to the Messiah; whom so many other prophecies describe as the messenger of the covenant of peace, and as the prince of peace, and as the priest and sacrifice on whom the chastisement of our

peace was laid. The conditional expressions at the close of the last verse, may either relate only to the words immediately preceding, "Ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me," or, at the utmost, cannot make the foregoing prediction uncertain, but restrict the benefits of it to them that diligently obey the voice of the Lord.

The principal parts of the prediction in chap. viii. from ver. 20, to the end, are only applicable to the times of the Messiah: for though it should be supposed, that some parts of this prediction, considered separately, might be applied to the conversion of proselytes before Christ's coming, it is only to the national conversion of Gentiles after his coming that we can reasonably apply the words in ver. 22, "Yea, many people, and strong *nations*, shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord."

As to the context where this prediction is found, the beginning of the chapter contains promises, resembling those in the 2d chapter, that God would dwell in Jerusalem; that she should become very populous, and be honoured as God's holy mountain; "that her streets should be full of boys and girls." And the Jews are told, that though this might be marvellous in their eyes, it would not be so in the eyes of God, who would save and bring back his people from the east and west, that they might dwell in Jerusalem. So that that city's becoming so populous, is not ascribed merely to the multiplying of the families that were already returned to Judea, but to the return of new multitudes from their dispersion. The 12th and 13th verses, not only promise to the Jews great temporal prosperity, but honour and renown among the heathen: so that whereas the house of Judah and Israel formerly were a curse among the

heathen, at the time in view "they should be a blessing." All which things give ground to apply this prediction to the happiest times of the Jews, under the most prosperous kings of the Asmonean race, as it is certain, that under some of them they were very prosperous. It was natural to mix predictions of the happiness of the church under the Messiah, with predictions concerning her happiest times before his coming; but the prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles, at the close of this chapter, does not seem to be a continuation of the foregoing, but rather to be a distinct prophecy by itself.—See ver. 18.

The King described in Zech. ix. 9, 10, is the King who was to enlighten the Gentiles, seeing he is said to rule them, and to speak peace to them; and the account given of his kingdom, has a singular conformity with the more ancient predictions of the universal kingdom of the Son of David, not only as to its extent, "reaching from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," but as to the justice, meekness, and condescension that would adorn his administration, Psa. lxxii. xlv; Isa. xi. Whereas this King is represented as *having salvation*, as the word so rendered is proved by good critics to admit a more active signification, as *bringing* or *giving salvation;** this is evidently more suitable to the other characters here given of this King, as having dominion to the ends of the earth, speaking peace to the heathen, and causing unspeakable joy in Zion: besides that what follows, ver. 11, about *delivering prisoners by the blood of the covenant*, cannot be otherwise explained, than by the prophetic doctrine concerning the efficacy of the Messiah's blood, and its influence on the blessings of God's covenant, together with the prophetic figures,

* See Lowth, and Pool's Synopsis.

expressing the spiritual salvation, or deliverance by the Messiah, in words borrowed from delivering captives and prisoners.

All these things shew that it is the Messiah, and not Zerubbabel, that is meant in this prediction. Zerubbabel was not a king, but a deputy-governor; he did not any thing that could be called "speaking peace to the heathen:" as he was not "king in Zion," far less could it be said, that "his dominion extended over the heathen from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

As to the expressions in ver. 10, about cutting off the chariot, and horse, and bow, from Ephraim and Jerusalem, none of the different meanings that can, with any shadow of reason, be affixed to these words, is inconsistent with the application of the whole prediction to the times of the Messiah; whether that cutting off of the instruments of war relate to the preservation of the faithful Jews from enemies, or the reconciling them to the heathen, to whom that king would speak peace, or the breaking the power of the unbelieving Jews for their unbelief; or whether the words are designed to explain the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, as not needing the usual instruments of war for promoting his conquests: all these things agree with the gospel-application of this prediction. It is proper to observe, that we find the like expressions elsewhere, not in threatenings against the Jews, but in gracious promises of safety, Micah v., see from ver. 7–13. In ver. 7, it is said, that the Jews should be in the midst of many people *as dew from the Lord;* and ver. 9, that *all their enemies should be cut off;* yet it is added in the very next verse, "I will cut off thy horses,—and I will destroy thy chariots."

The predictions in the first part of the 9th chapter,

Zech. ix. 1, 2, 3, concerning the judgments that were to come on the Syrians, Tyre, and the Philistines, were fulfilled in the times of the Greek empire, when Damascus, and the treasures of Darius there, were betrayed to Alexander the Great; when "Tyre was cast out, her power in the sea smitten, and herself devoured with fire, though she was very wise, and had built herself a strong hold;" which made the siege of that place cost Alexander so dear, and retard his conquests so long; and when afterwards Gaza was taken, and her king or governor, Bœtis, slain. What is foretold about the Philistines, ver. 7, was fulfilled when Alexander Janneus, one of the Jewish kings, of the Asmonean race, having subdued several of their chief cities, many of them embraced the true religion, and became capable of places of honour and trust among the Jews, as the Jebusites are said, Judges i. 21, to have been incorporated with the Benjamites: so that this prediction resembles those formerly mentioned, where threatenings of temporal judgments against particular nations, are mixed with promises of their conversion.

For explaining ver. 8, it is useful to observe, that in ancient times, Judea suffered a great deal, by being a thoroughfare to the armies marching to or from Egypt; which may be one chief reason why their most prosperous times are described as times when "the oppressor, or the uncircumcised, should not pass through them any more;" which last expression, however, must be understood in the limited sense in which it is so frequently taken in other writings, as well as in scripture.

The predictions in the last part of the chapter, from ver. 13, were fulfilled in the famous victories of the Jews over the armies of Antiochus Epiphanes, and his successors; seeing these were the chief victories of the "sons

of Zion over the sons of Greece;" in which "the Lord was seen over them," so as to occasion the extraordinary success, joy, and renown, described in verses 15 and 16. The predictions in the 10th chapter seem to relate to the same times.

Chap. ix. 13. When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man: And the Lord shall be seen over them; they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine.

Chap. x. Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, ver. 7; and I will strengthen the house of Judah, ver. 6; they shall be as mighty men which tread down their enemies,—and they shall fight because the Lord is with them, ver. 5; and their heart shall rejoice as through wine, ver. 7.

In the sequel of this 10th chapter, there are gracious promises concerning a future restoring and multiplying of the Jews that were yet in distant nations: ver. 8, etc. "I will hiss for them, and gather them, for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries,—and turn again. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt,—and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away." What is said here about the restoration of the Jews, is applied by some to their final restoration from their dispersion by the Romans; but others, to shew that it may be applied to the times before Christ, observe, that, according to Josephus, the Ptolemy who caused translate the Jewish scriptures into Greek, sent back about 120,000 Jews on that occasion.

The view taken of the various chief contents of the 8th, 9th, and 10th chapters of this book of Zechariah, shews, that the two last cited predictions of the Messiah

are mixed with the predictions concerning the happiest times of the Jews, under the Maccabees, suitably to the above general remarks concerning prophetic connections. As Daniel, to whom Zechariah was for some time contemporary, had prophesied expressly about the empire of the Greeks, with whom the Jews had no manner of concern in the times of those two prophets, and probably knew little about them, it was of importance to them to have suitable prophetic warnings and promises concerning the chief things that were to befall them under that empire.

It shews what a comprehensive prophecy this of Zechariah is, that after the predictions in the three chapters last considered, relating to the times of the Greek empire, the prophet proceeds in the four following chapters, to the chief events that were to befall the Jews in the times of the Roman empire, or in the times of the Messiah; though according to the prophetic way of writing in other places, this prophet, after coming down to the times of the Messiah, seems sometimes to intermix predictions relating to more ancient times.

The four last chapters of Zechariah contain very remarkable passages relating to the chief branches both of the gospel doctrine and history of the Messiah; more particularly relating to the dignity of the person of the Messiah, his humiliation and sufferings, the unbelief and dispersion of the Jews, the enlightening of the Gentiles, and the abolishing of the ceremonial law.

The 11th chapter, which foretells that the Messiah should be sold for thirty pieces of silver, which should be cast down in the temple, and bestowed in purchasing the Potter's field, contains predictions of a national desolation of the Jews, applicable only to what was brought about by the Romans, and not to any more ancient

calamity brought on that people, either by Antiochus Epiphanes, or other enemies before the days of Christ. If, in those more ancient times, enemies took in their chief city, polluted their temple, made great slaughter of their people; yet it could not be said of those times, "that the covenant between God and all the people, as well as the brotherhood of the Jews among themselves, was broken, so as to cause their utter ruin;" that God would no more pity the inhabitants of the land, nor deliver them out of the hands of their enemies. The reverse of this happened in the times of the persecution by the Seleucidæ. The people continued faithful in God's covenant,* and God pitied them, and delivered them speedily. The more clear predictions in the verses that have been cited, justify the common interpretation of the more figurative expressions in the beginning of the chapter, as meant of the destruction of the Jewish city and temple by fire.†

Here, as in other predictions, prophetic threatenings against the irreclaimable Jews are mixed with gracious promises to a faithful remnant, called in this chapter, as ofttimes elsewhere, *the poor*. The same persons who are called, ver. 4 and 5, the *flock of slaughter*, whom oppressors persecuted, but whom God would feed, (and are distinguished from the wicked inhabitants of the land on whom God would not have pity, ver. 6,) are called, ver. 11, the *poor of the flock;* who would know the prophet's words to be the words of the Lord, at the time when the covenant which he had made with all the people should be broken.

* See Psalm xliv.

† See Mr. Lowth's notes on the 1st verse, and Josephus on the Jewish war, book vii., chap. xii., about the opening of the gate of the temple.

If the prophet Zechariah sustains different persons in different parts of this chapter, first personating a shepherd, and afterwards him who was to betray the Messiah for thirty pieces of silver, this is no more than what we meet with in other prophetic writings.

Whereas it is said, ver. 8, "three shepherds also will I cut off in one month;" though this is applied by some to the chief priests, the scribes and Pharisees, others apply it rather to the cutting off of three Roman emperors, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, who were the sovereign rulers, and consequently (according to the style of the prophets and other writers) shepherds of the Jews, as well as of other conquered nations; and were all cut off by violent deaths in so short a time, that none of them reigned a year, but only some months; and cutting off in a month seems to have been a sort of proverbial speech, denoting a short time, as in Hosea v. 7, "They have dealt treacherously: now shall a month devour them with their portion." As the cutting off these three shepherds in so short a time was in itself a very extraordinary thing, and happened at the very time of the desolations which this chapter foretells, it was a very proper sign of time for making those predictions more circumstantial.

It is foretold, Zechariah xii. 10, that the Lord (for that He speaks is evident from ver. 1) would pour His Spirit on the Jews, to make them look on Him whom they had pierced, and mourn; and He whom they are said to have pierced is the same who is said to pour His Spirit on them, even the spirit of grace and supplication; which prediction comes after these remarkable words in ver. 9, which seems to begin a new prophecy distinct from what takes up the foregoing part of the chapter, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I

will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

As to the prediction in the first part of this chapter, from the beginning to ver. 9, which some apply to the victories of the Jews under the Maccabees, and others to their preservation from some assaults, and others to their final restoration, the chief things contained in it are, 1, A formidable invasion and siege of Judah and Jerusalem by the people round about; 2, The success of the Jews against these enemies, expressed by Jerusalem's being "a cup of trembling to them, a burdensome stone, like a hearth of fire among the wood, and a torch of fire in a sheaf;" 3, That at that time the first victories should be obtained, not by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but by the people in the open country of Judah, and that the Jews of different ranks should be enabled to give proofs of extraordinary valour. These characters seem really applicable to the times of the Maccabees. What is said at the close of the 6th verse may signify, that it should not be with Jerusalem as with some other great cities in after ages, (such as New Tyre), which were not built in the very same place, but at some distance from the ancient cities whose name they retained.

The 13th chapter contains, at ver. 7, a very remarkable prediction concerning the sufferings of the Messiah, the great Shepherd of God's flock, by the sword of divine justice appointed to awake against Him, and to smite Him; which prediction was considered formerly, not only as foretelling the Messiah's sufferings, but as containing the mysterious doctrine of His two natures. The preceding part of the chapter contains predictions concerning the opening of a fountain for taking away sin and uncleanness, the abolishing of idolatry, and silencing of false prophets. It can found no just objec-

tion against the gospel application of the prediction in ver. 7, whether these foregoing predictions be extended to the times of the gospel in general, as times when the idolatry and the oracles of the heathen nations should come to an end, or restricted to the times of the final conversion of the Jews, as times when the idolatry of so many nations of Christians shall be abolished, and the delusions of false prophets that shall oppose the conversion of the Jews, shall be discovered and avoided. As the gospel application of the prediction in ver. 7 to the Messiah's sufferings is perfectly consistent with either of the two meanings given to the foregoing context, so it receives considerable confirmation from the following, which contains characters of a future general desolation of Judea, not applicable to any desolation that happened between the days of Zechariah and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and therefore is an argument that the following prediction in the next chapter relates to the same event. It is said, chapter xiii. 8, that "in all the land two parts therein shall be cut off, but the third shall be left therein."

The 14th chapter contains predictions clearly implying the future conversion of the Gentiles, seeing it is foretold, ver. 9, that "the Lord shall be king over all the earth; and that in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one;" and ver. 16, "that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." The last two verses were formerly considered as foretelling the abolishing of the ceremonial law, seeing they speak of a time when there should be no such difference as that law made between the vessels or utensils of the temple and other utensils.

Whereas the first two verses of this chapter foretell a siege and captivity, and the following context, Zech. xiv. 4, 10, 11, 12, a restoration of the Jews, and total defeat of their enemies; some apply these predictions to the desolations and subsequent deliverances of the Jews, in the times of the Maccabees; and others to their destruction by Titus, and their final restoration yet to come. The chief arguments for the first opinion seem to be these: 1. That the prophecy of desolation in this context does not mention the destruction of the city or temple, but only the calamities of the inhabitants of the city. 2. That after saying the half of the city shall go into captivity, ver. 2, it is added, that "the residue shall not be cut off from the city;" which last part does not seem to agree to the times of Titus. 3. That immediately after the prophecy of desolation by enemies, there is added a prophecy of God's going forth to fight against these enemies; which seems to imply that the prophet speaks of a desolation that would be soon followed with a great deliverance, which is applicable to the times of Antiochus, but not of Titus.

For the second interpretation there are the following arguments: 1. That though the destruction of the city of Jerusalem is not expressly mentioned in the first two verses of this chapter, yet it is implied in what is said in ver. 10, which seems to speak plainly enough of the rebuilding, as well as the repeopling, of the city; and that the desolation described in the 2d verse of this chapter, and at the close of the former chapter, far exceeds what was brought about by Antiochus: "Half of the city shall go forth into captivity;" "In all the land, two parts therein shall be cut off, and die." 2. As to these expressions, "The residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city," they do not deter-

mine that the half, or any other proportion, should be thus spared, seeing, besides those who were made captives and those who were spared, a great many were killed; and therefore these expressions are applicable to what Josephus tells us in his Jewish War, book vii., chap. 15, "That there were forty thousand suffered to go whither they would." 3. That, according to the prophetic way of writing, events that happen in very distant ages to the same people are sometimes found in contiguous predictions, as was proved formerly, and of which there is a plain instance in the two last verses of the former chapter. 4. It seems to be a very decisive argument, that the restoration of Jerusalem here foretold, ver. 11, should be such that there should be "no more" utter destruction after it. And if it be objected that the words "no more" may only signify "not for a long time," even in that limited sense the words cannot be well applied to the time betwixt Antiochus and Titus.

Seeing there is so much ground for applying the prophecy of restoration in this chapter to events yet future, there is the less reason to wonder at the obscurity of some passages in it. What is said, ver. 4, about cleaving the Mount of Olives, may be rendered more credible even in the most literal meaning, by what Josephus relates concerning the* cleaving of the same mountain by an earthquake in the days of Uzziah, which earthquake is mentioned here, ver. 5.

The view taken of the four last chapters of this prophetic book shews, on the one hand, that the other contents of these chapters have in them no just objections, but rather confirmations of the Christian interpretation of several predictions in them, as relating to the times of

* Joseph. Antiqit. b. 9. chap. 11.

the Messiah; yea, that almost all the contents of these chapters relate to those times; and, on the other hand, that these predictions contain a considerable number of the chief branches, both of the gospel doctrine and history, concerning the Messiah's person and sufferings, His church, and His enemies.

As to the person of the Messiah, He is called *the Lord*, chap. 11, who is said to be prized at so goodly a price as thirty pieces. In chapter 12, He who is said to be pierced, and that by the Jews, is called *the Lord*, even He who pours down the spirit of grace and supplication. In chapter 13, He against whom the sword is said to awake in order to smite Him, is not only called *a man*, but the Lord says of Him, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow." As to His sufferings, the 11th chapter contains a circumstantial account of the manner of His being betrayed. The 12th chapter gives a hint of the manner of His death, that "He would be pierced;" and of the chief instruments of it, the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And the 13th chapter speaks of His sufferings more immediately from the hand of God. Concerning the unbelief of the Jews, it is foretold in the 11th chapter, that God's covenant with that people should be broken, as the 12th foretells that they would pierce the Messiah. Concerning their desolation and dispersion, it is foretold in the 11th chapter, ver. 6, that their land should be smitten by its enemies, and no more delivered out of their hands; and in chapter 13, that in all the land two parts should be cut off; and in chapter 14, that the city should be taken, the houses rifled, and the half of the people should go forth into captivity. The enlightening of the Gentiles is both foretold in more clear expressions, shewing that the Lord would be King in all the earth, and that the

nations would worship Him; and intimated in the figurative expressions, about "living waters going out from Jerusalem, both towards the former sea and the hinder sea," Zech. xiv. 9, 16, 8. And the last two verses seem to foretell the abolishing of the ceremonial law.

Sect. XI. *Of Malachi's Prophecies.*

As the two former prophets shew that the Jews were in a very low and corrupt state at the times immediately after their return from Babylon, the prophet Malachi, who, on good grounds, is reckoned to have lived a considerable time after that return, and to have been contemporary with Nehemiah, represents that people as in a very corrupt and afflicted condition still. It deserves particular consideration, as to the manner in which the prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles is introduced, in Mal. i. 10, 11, that it is immediately after a threatening, intimating the rejection of the Jews for their sins, ver. 10, 11. "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts."

This context gives light to the connection between Malachi's subsequent predictions of the Messiah, and the other subjects of his prophecy, which are chiefly wholesome reproofs to the Jews, and particularly to their priests, for the abuses which prevailed at that time, and awful warnings of the danger of these things. The conversion of the Gentiles is introduced in this first

chapter in a manner very suitable to the ancient prediction in the song of Moses, that God would provoke the Jews to jealousy by a foolish nation, viz., the Gentiles, Deut. xxxii. 21. And in the predictions of the Messiah, both in the 3d and 4th chapters of Malachi, the Jews are told that the day of His coming, though justly the object of their desire, would be the terrible day of the Lord to such obstinate sinners as many of the Jews were in the prophet's days.

It is a very comprehensive prophecy of the Messiah that we have at the beginning of the 3d chapter of this book, containing an account of His divine nature, His mediatory office, His forerunner, and the time of His coming, viz., during the standing of the second temple. What is added a little below, about his purifying the sons of Levi, seems to have a special relation to the prophetic reproofs given to the sons of Levi in the former part of the book. The last chapter speaks of a great and terrible day of the Lord, that should be contemporary with the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness, His way being prepared by a forerunner, in the power and spirit of Elias.

PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF HAPPINESS.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The distinction between the objective and subjective, on which modern philosophy so much insists, will be found as old at least as the following treatise of Maclaurin. In answer to the question proposed, he proves that our happiness depends both on an objective cause and on subjective experience; and pushing the inquiry still further, he shews that no objective cause is adequate for the purpose, and no subjective experience can yield true enjoyment apart from a personal knowledge of, and interest in, the Divine Being, who formed man for His own glory. The tendency of modern ethical speculation has been on the whole to fix the basis of obligation and the standard of virtue in the nature of God, on the principle that no theory can be complete and satisfactory which ignores the higher relationships of man. So far the speculations of our author, identifying happiness with the exercise of right affections towards Deity, anticipate this tendency. In regard to the circumstances in which the Essay was composed, all that is known is that it must have been written considerably before the year 1736. It was printed in 1773 from the manuscripts of the author.

AN ANSWER TO A QUESTION PROPOSED IN A PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AT GLASGOW, VIZ.—

Whether the happiness of the mind consists in the enjoyment of things without it, or in the reflection on its own perfections, or in both?

PART I.

The meaning of the question cannot be, Where is any joy or pleasure to be had? for that needs not inquiry; but, Where is the greatest? or, if that appear a different question, Where is full contentment to be had? that is, such fulness of joy as excludes all uneasiness. But this last question is only in appearance different from the former, for no man can be fully content to want the greatest joy he is capable of, if he is conscious of that capacity, and knows the excellency of that joy which he wants, which is a consciousness and knowledge that a rational being cannot always avoid. The presence of what is necessarily painful must be felt; but that the absence of what is necessary to happiness, or the greatest joy, is also unavoidably felt, will appear by considering what keeps all the world in constant agitation and action. The source of action is desire; the world is full of desire; and desire still regards an absent good.

The use of reason is to choose the greatest good; for

to prefer any thing to what is best, is what we call *a bad choice.* The greatest joy is what is most intense, and most durable. The greatest intenseness cannot be described, but the longest duration of joy is that which is perpetual. And that there can be no full contentment without the expectation of it, is evident from this, that the same reason which makes a man wish to be happy at one time, makes him wish to be happy at another time, and consequently at all times; and a wish or desire, without hope, is uneasiness, and inconsistent with contentment. A man cannot be fully content at one time, if he fear not to be so afterwards; yea, the more present pleasure or joy a man has, the greater is his vexation at the thoughts of losing it: which perhaps may contribute to solve that odd phenomenon of some rational creatures being easy, at least pretending to be easy, and even to be gay, and rejoice at the hopes of losing all joy when they lose their bodies; because, abstracting from bodily pleasures, they have no relish of any other worth the desiring, and find even these so nauseous and clogging, that they would not think it perhaps very desirable to have them for ever: yet to renounce all hopes of perpetual joy, or heaven, may be called an acquiescence in the half of Misery's hell; and it would be easy to demonstrate, that to rejoice in such a sorry prospect argues the secret fear of a worse; and that, if duly considered, might make an argument to prove the reality both of what they fear, and of what they renounce.

It is useful to compare the different kinds of pleasures, in order to find out the highest; and the longest enjoyment of that is happiness.

SECT. I. *Of the pleasures of sense, or mere sensations.*

It is not needful to insist long in shewing that happiness cannot consist in these. Some measure of them is necessary for present ease; but there is a difference between their being necessary, and their being sufficient. They are necessary to remove antecedent uneasiness, which is inconsistent with complete happiness, excluding all uneasiness. They are necessary only sometimes; but thought is at all times necessary, and constant joyful thought necessary to constant contentment. As they may and must be wanted sometimes, and the mind joyful without them, it might be joyful always without them, were it not for something in our present state that is not essential to us. It is but a few moments of this life they can make pleasant; but the mind desires to have joy always. The mind must be still feeding itself with thought, either pleasant or unpleasant. It is joyful thought it hungers and thirsts after, and the use of reason is in making the best choice for that end, for the variety of matter is indefinite.

Of all enjoyments, sensations are the most clogging. It would be a poor happiness that would necessarily require great intervals of misery to give it a relish. Now, there must be long intervals of sensation; but there can be none of thought. Sensation needs the addition of pleasant thought to give any durable joy. Solitary contemplation is both delightful and (which infers a particular noble delight, justly deserving a peculiar distinguishing name) it is becoming a man. To delight in mere solitary sensations is sottish and brutal, and common luxury seeks always society and converse, neither of which is sensation, but a kind of contempla-

tion. The most pleasant sensations cannot so fill the mind, even in the meantime, as that unpleasant thoughts cannot make them tasteless; nor can painful sensations, commonly at least, exclude the joy of contemplations, but rather increase the relish of it oftentimes. Bad news, an affront, revenge, envy, make the sot's darling pleasures nauseous to him. Joyful meditations elevate the sick and diseased saint. The Roman, if I remember the story, who ran to Rome with the news of victory, was so filled with joyful thoughts, that it excluded all attention and feeling of the thorn in his foot, till his joy was assuaged. The man whom Dionysius set down to a feast, with the point of a sword over his head, found the pain in his thoughts sufficient to spoil all the pleasure of the feast.

Sect. II. *Of mental pleasures strictly so called, or the pleasures of thought, knowledge, or contemplation.*

Contemplation may reasonably be taken in a larger sense than what it is sometimes confined to, when it is distinguished from the pleasure of affection, action, or society, since it is certain that our own actions, or the society of others, give us pleasure only by contemplating them, and the pleasure of affection to any object results from a particular view or contemplation of it.

The chief design of this inquiry being to consider which must be the most pleasant contemplation, or the highest kind of mental enjoyment, it is useful to compare the different kinds of pleasant contemplations, and to consider the causes of that pleasure that is in them.

Every contemplation relates to some object really existing, or supposed to be so; and since there is no

object in being, but a being of infinite perfections, and the various manifestations of them, that is, God and his works, no wonder that every object is capable of giving joy in the contemplation of it, less or more.

Beauty is the name we commonly give to that quality (or whatsoever we call it) in any object, which is the source or cause of joy in the contemplation of it. But since many objects are not the proper causes of the beautiful qualities they are endued with, or of our view of them, or joy in that view, therefore it is useful to distinguish between the objective source and the efficient source of beauty, contemplation, or joy. *Beautiful* is the name we are used from our infancy to give to regular material figures, motions, etc., and is an abstract idea so familiar even to children, and to the most ignorant vulgar, that they apply it to objects otherwise the most unlike in the world, temper, sentiments, inclinations, actions, harmonious sounds, proportions of matter, and, in general, to everything that has marks of contrivance in it, which is the impression of thought and design, unless the design itself be evil, and appear contrary to a rule which we conceive is the standard of all beauty in action and thought. *Beauty* is in effect the name the Greeks and Latins gave to the universe, (κοσμος, *mundus*,) and justly, since the whole and parts are so pleasant to contemplate.

But there is nothing more evident than that all beautiful objects are not equal; and even in material objects, which are the lowest order, there is a vast diversity, according as there is more or less contrivance or thought in them; not that there is any thought or design intrinsic in matter itself, but that its form, proportions, and motions, have the manifest marks and signs of thought in

them; and what appears void of these, appears deformed and confused.

But *living beauties* (by which name we may express rational beings) are a quite different and higher kind of pleasant objects of contemplation, having not merely signs of external thought, (which is all the beauty we see in matter), but being, as it were, constantly full of internal thought themselves.

Sect. III.—*The pre-eminence of living sources of pleasant contemplation above those that are lifeless.*

This may appear by considering what condition a man would be in who had all the lifeless universe to contemplate all alone, without any thought of the living cause of it, or any knowledge of any living being in it, but himself. Supposing there should be never so many living intelligent beings existing in the world; yet if he had no knowledge or contemplation of them, it would be to him absolute solitude; and surely if we reflect on the frame of our natures, we may justly suppose it would, through time at least, turn to insupportable melancholy.

The chief contemplation of living or intelligent objects of thought, is but an another name for society. The enjoyment of lovely society, (or of that which is thought to be such,) is what gives the greatest cheerfulness; and the loss of it, (as in the death of friends,) the most exquisite and the most becoming sorrow. Society heightens and multiplies the pleasures of other contemplations, or even sensations, to such a degree, that it can raise joy out of objects, whose pleasure in solitude would perhaps scarce be discernible; and can even make trifles, that otherwise would appear insipid, strangely delightful, however unjustly

oftentimes, by excluding thoughts of a better sort. Nor can this be imputed merely to the poisonous pleasure of pride and affectation to be source of joy to others; since besides any pleasure a man has in communicating his thoughts to others, he finds pleasure in receiving the like from them; and in receiving delightful contemplations from one person, it heightens our own particular delight, to have many others sharing with us, in an enjoyment which, in this respect, is the reverse of outward possessions; and it is not, like them, lost or lessened, but increased, by being communicated: and they that covet it most, are most covetous of being profusely liberal of it to others, and would find themselves poor with it, if they were not bountiful; and therefore endeavour to possess it, and enrich themselves with it, by giving it to others.

The best company can make any place or prospect pleasant; but no place can make the worst company pleasant, or even tolerable.

Sect. IV.—*Of the most delightful living objects of contemplation.*

Here it is needful to consider the nature of intellectual beauty, or that in an intelligent being which is the cause of joy in contemplating it: and if these causes admit of degrees, it is plain the greatest cause must have the greatest effect. *Excellency,* or *perfection,* is a name we oft-times give to that in a mind, which is the source or cause of joy to itself or others; but that quality which is a hindrance of joy, or which, though it gives some joy, hinders more than what it gives, we call an *imperfection.* A mind cannot have joy in itself, without

knowledge (or contemplation) and power. These are called sometimes *physical* perfections: but those qualities of a mind, which are not only called causes of joy to itself, but also to others, we use to call *moral* perfections; such as goodness and justice. The latter consist in affections and inclinations of the mind; and no mind is the proper cause of joy to others, without being inclined; for if the physical perfections of a being give us joy, merely in contemplating them, without his inclination, he is not properly the cause of our joy, but its object, as lifeless matter is.

It is plain, physical and moral perfections admit of degrees; and when they exist united in one subject, the greater they are, the greater is the excellency and beauty of it, and the greater joy there is even in the contemplation of its perfection, besides other effects of it.

To the inward perfections of any rational agent, we may add our relation to him, if he be a friend or benefactor, or one in whom we are any other way particularly interested, more than in other rational agents; and when we join these together, the perfections of that being, and its relation to us, which are qualities, if I may speak so, that admit of different degrees, we have a view at least, of some of the principal qualities in an intelligent being that give the most pleasant contemplation.

The supreme, or highest mental perfection in being, and to which we have the nearest and most joyful relation, is that whose contemplation is necessary to happiness.

If there were no intellectual beauty in being, or none knowable by us, but what is finite, like human minds, there would be none sufficient to happiness, or full and lasting contentment; for finite beauty is that than which we can conceive, and consequently desire, and reasonably

wish for a greater; and while we may wish for something better than that we have, while we may feel want in the object or source of our joy, we have not the greatest, that is, full contentment: and to tell us, that we must chiefly desire only what is attainable, and the best object we can desire is not attainable, or is not in being, and that therefore we should be content with the want of it, is to tell us to be content with misery, because it is fatal and unavoidable; which, instead of being a ground of contentment, would be the true ground of despair and anguish: for experience shews, that impossibility of supply or relief is the principal thing to embitter want or trouble.

All pretence to full contentment in our present state, whatever it be, (that is, to wish for nothing but what we have, and are sure of,) is a pretence which every man's practice demonstrates to be ridiculous affectation; and the same reason that makes a man discontent, though free of all bodily uneasiness, and enjoying the pleasant thought of any finite or inferior beauty, would make him discontent with any below what is supreme, or the highest possible, which must be infinite; for the meaning of finite is that than which there might possibly be a greater.

The name by which we sometimes distinguish the highest beauties or perfections of any kind, even finite beauties in mind or matter, is *glory*, as the glory of sun and stars, and of angels.

One of the properest terms we have to signify the sufficiency of supreme glory to give perpetual fulness of joy, (below which nothing, as was observed before, can give true and full contentment,) is *beatific*.

I remember to have heard a question proposed in a company some years ago, to this effect: Whether or not

it might be possible, in the nature of the thing, for any thing we know, that a rational creature might have beatitude, or perpetual fulness of joy, in the mere contemplation of created things; of which contemplation, indeed, God would be the source and cause, but not the object? It will be no digression, I think, from the question which is the occasion of this little essay, to consider that question I have named; for the answer of either of them serves both.

Let us suppose, then, a rational creature having access to know and contemplate the universal system, intellectual and material, and consider the consequences.

It is evident he would not be content to be confined to the knowledge of a part; for that, however durable the pleasure of it would be, in comparison of our short-lived joys, yet would cloy through time. When a man is in a beautiful chamber in a prison, the beauty of it may give some pleasure at first; but let us suppose him confined to that contemplation for innumerable millions of ages, it would certainly prove a very great and growing torment; yea, experience shows it would prove a sensible pain in a few days, if a man have no other pleasant thoughts to entertain him.

There is some proportion between the parts of the material beauty and the whole; for the very nature of material beauty includes proportions between the whole and the parts. In matter, want of proportion is deformity. This proves that the system of matter, which is beautiful, is finite; for if it was infinite, there would be no proportion between the finite parts and the infinite whole. Besides that form and figure, which are the beauty of matter, are qualities of the limits, the bounds, or surface, of matter; the world, therefore, has limits. To make matter infinite,

would make the world a beautiful point, shut up in a hollow case of infinite deformity and confusion; and the inside of that case having limits, and consequently a figure, however irregular, that figure not being essential to it, (for no particular figure is so,) would argue an external cause or mind having power over its substance. But mind cannot produce infinite useless deformity and confusion; because mind always works with inclination and design, and its workmanship bears the marks and impression of it.

But not to insist on this, since there are so many other arguments to prove that matter is finite, and since all that belongs to the present subject is, that all the matter that has order and beauty in it, or that can afford pleasant contemplation, is finite; its being finite, and the proportion between the whole and parts in beauty, which is the cause of joy, proves a proportion between the whole and parts in that joy, which is the effect of beauty; and therefore, since the beauty of any part of it is cloying, it is an argument that the like may be said of the whole; only the beauty of the whole would stand out longer against satiety and distaste, than that of a part. But that object which is not sufficient to stand out infinite repetitions, if I may speak so, is insufficient for eternal or perpetual duration. Any part of the world has a proportion to the whole, but no part of perpetual duration has proportion to the whole of it.

This argument may be applied not only to the material, but also to the intellectual system of creatures; and we may justly say, that a society that had no joyful contemplation of the Creator, but only of the creation, and of one another, would, in a finite space of time, (and consequently at the beginning of eternity,) find the world a narrow confinement and a dungeon,

and find the pleasure of this mutual society degenerate into melancholy solitude. For suppose that all of them knew all the world, so that none of them had any thing to show or communicate but what all of them knew already, and all of them were weary of, the whole of their contemplation and enjoyment behoved to corrupt and turn nauseous.

A rational creature, in the above-mentioned circumstances, advancing in the contemplation of God's works, could not possibly very long avoid the knowledge of the glory of God, so visible in all his works.

This would give him some knowledge of a beauty superior to that to which we supposed him confined; and the knowledge of an object infinitely superior to all the creatures, would hinder contentment, if he was denied that higher degree and kind of contemplation of the same object, which is called *enjoyment*, or *vision*, and which will be considered afterwards.

Since mental pleasure is in knowledge, the knowledge of the effect does not fully satisfy the mind without knowing the cause, and consequently without knowing the first cause.

Thus we have three properties of that glory, the view of which is so requisite to beatitude. It must be *supreme, original*, and *underived*. This shows, that the view of divine glory, (such as will not cloy,) is necessary to beatitude. That it is sufficient, may be made evident thus: That excellency, the view of which has been already experienced, (which I desire to mention with veneration,) sufficient to eternal fulness of joy in a being capable of, or rather incapable of wanting, infinite happiness, must be much more sufficient to an eternal fulness of joy in finite beings. If that beauty and excellence, without change, interruption, variety, or

progress, in the view of it, was not, and could not, be cloying to an infinite knowledge and intelligence; much less can the fullest view of what a finite mind is capable of, ever turn less pleasant, unless constant progress be possible and needful, and therefore attainable.

PART II.

In considering the cause of the greatest mental joy or beatitude, we must consider not only the external or objective cause, but also the internal or subjective cause.

The objective cause is supreme excellency; but the subjective, or inherent internal cause, (which must exist in us, though not from us,) is our knowledge or contemplation of it, and affection or disposition of mind with which we contemplate it.

Sect. I. *Different kinds and degrees of contemplation.*

Irrational animals have no real enjoyment (if anything they have deserve such a name) but what comes from the Creator as its first cause. Beatitude, as was proved before, requires not only such joy as shall have the First Cause for the author of it, but such as shall have him for the object of it. Brutes, and brutal men, have all their real pleasure from the Creator; but they have no joy in him, since their joy is not in the knowledge of him.

As there are various beauties or objects of pleasant

knowledge, so there are various degrees or kinds of knowledge of the same object. Supreme glory, as was proved, is the only beatific object; but every degree or kind of contemplation of it is not beatific contemplation; yea, some contemplations of it, to some dispositions, are more cloying and unpleasant than almost any other contemplations of other objects; and we may conceive such a contemplation of it is in some, as might be a most effectual and most just cause of anguish.

Let us consider the different views the mind may have of inferior beauties, mental or material. Let us suppose a man enjoying the most pleasant and most ravishing prospect on earth, in the spring time, delighting himself with all the charms of that place, and of that beautiful season; and then let us suppose him afterwards, in a dark winter night, remembering, or contemplating that prospect; the object of contemplation is the same in both cases, but the contemplations themselves so different, that whereas the former was the cause of joy, the latter may be the cause of the contrary, that is, melancholy.

In vision or sight of material beauty, we are passive recipients, if I may so speak. In imagination, or pure intellection, which sometimes, perhaps, is the strict sense of idea, we are active causes. The latter, abstracting from composition, abstraction, etc., is a mere picture, an imitation of the former. The former is properly an effect of the Creator's power, the latter of our own. The one is the work of nature, the other, in a manner, a work of art. No wonder the former be a greater cause of joy.

It is not needful to insist long in shewing the difference between these two sorts of contemplation, vision of an object as present, and the dark knowledge of it as absent. In desiring any mental enjoyment, desire sup-

poses that we have some knowledge of the beloved object already, which knowledge is the cause of desire; and desire likewise supposes another quite different knowledge of the same object, which we call *presence*, or *enjoyment*, and which is wanting when we desire it.

Desire of knowledge, or contemplation of any object, supposes a mixture of knowledge and ignorance of it; for if we had no knowledge of it at all, we could not desire it.

Let us suppose a man seeing a machine, building, city, or beautiful country, he sees in one simultaneous view more than he can imagine at once. A man remembers and imagines by parts what he sees in one view. Besides, active producing of ideas, because it requires effort, is ofttimes uneasy in comparison of vision, which is a contemplation of an object more comprehensive, easy, bright, stedfast, and consequently more delightful, than any other.

Let us reflect on some of the most extraordinary effects of friendship, (and there is nothing in history has had more extraordinary effects,) particularly the greatest sorrow and melancholy that ever any man felt for the absence or death of the most virtuous friend; his thinking on him when dead, or absent, and seeing him when present, are contemplations of the same object, but so different, that the same reason that makes the one pleasant, makes the other proportionably sorrowful.

The presence of a material object is that which gives us the clearest perception and contemplation of it, and in some sense admits of degrees.

The presence of a rational being is when we have, not only the clearest view of his state, and qualities, and disposition, of which the face is a mysterious representation, but also are within reach of mutual and reciprocal

communication. If a rational being were present to us, so as to know all we think and do, but would make no return to us, nor give any intimation of affection and inclination to our good, or to answer our desires; as it would not be mutual presence, so, as to our comfort, it would be in effect absence and distance.

The more a rational being communicates to us, and particularly the more clear view we have of him, he is the more present to us; so that presence admits of degrees.

The favourable presence of a rational being is when we enjoy his presence with signs of good will to us; and the joy of it is proportionable to our love of him, and his power to do us good.

Sect. II. *Of affection.*

Besides the beauty of an object, and the degree or kind of contemplation of it, the affection with which we contemplate it has no small influence on the joy that results from it. Two persons may have the same view, or the same thoughts, concerning the same object, and yet difference of affection may make the same view far more pleasant to the one than to the other; yea, may make it pleasant to the one, and painful to the other.

Curiosity is the inclination we satisfy, when we delight in the view of a lifeless object, without any regard to any advantage by it, different from the pleasant view of it. Love is the affection which is the internal or subjective cause of delight, in contemplating an intelligent being; but a man may incline, and take pleasure, in contemplating even an intelligent being, without the affection of love; and then he takes merely

the pleasure of curiosity. Herod was desirous to see the most amiable person that ever was in the world, without loving him; and vicious persons, or perhaps even Atheists, may take some kind of pleasure even in theological contemplations, merely from curiosity.

We cannot love the presence or society of any person, without love to the person himself, unless it be for the sake of some advantage different from his presence; and then it is not properly his presence we love or delight in, but some other interest we propose by it.

We cannot delight in contemplating any person as happy, without loving him; and we cannot perfectly love any person without making his happiness, in a manner, our own. If we had a perfect love of an infinitely happy being, it would be an inexhaustible source of joy, though we are incapable of knowing all his blessedness, and consequently incapable of infinite happiness.

It would take a treatise to shew the influence of a just and well-grounded love on happiness. The pleasure of society depends on it; and the exercise of that lovely affection has an elevated noble pleasure in it, even in sorrow, in pity, in sympathising with distressed virtue, though it were but in a fable. An affection which, even when exercised towards inferior objects, and when disappointed and sorrowful, retains still a noble mixture of delight in the subject of it, and is amiable to those who contemplate it, when it is in the most perfect degree directed towards the most perfect object, must be considered as a principal ingredient necessary to beatitude.

When the reason of our love to a person is his physical perfections, it is esteem; when the reason of it is his favours, or some relation to ourselves, which is a durable source of favours, it is gratitude; to delight in his happi-

ness, is benevolence; and that love which has for its special object and reason his moral perfections, is approbation or complacence, though this last term is sometimes taken in a larger sense; and all these contribute to that love which consists in desire of enjoying, of having the view, presence and society, and favour of a lovely object.

A just love is when the reason of it is true, or when the object is really endued with those perfections, or causes and reasons of love, which are supposed to be in it.

Experience shews that approbation heightens benevolence, and therefore the want of it naturally lessens it; and the greater the physical perfections of an object are, if they be joined with moral deformity, they make the object the more odious, and its presence and society the more unpleasant.

When we contemplate objects of unequal perfection and loveliness, it is just to have unequal love to them, or to love them in proportion to their loveliness, and to give the preference to the highest.

We may conceive several orders of justice in love and affection, according to the several orders of the objects of affection. The highest justice we are capable of, is to have a just affection, or to give just preference to the highest perfection: where there are many objects of affection equally lovely, to love them equally, and consequently to have more love to many of them, or to a greater number, than to a less; because whatever reason there is in one of them, or any smaller number, to make us love them, there is still more reason for love in a greater number of them.

We cannot be happy in any company, not even in our own, without love and approbation; the more compla-

cence, approbation, and esteem, the more benevolence. Infinite happiness can want no degree of anything necessary to the highest approbation and love of the subject of it. These things are necessarily connected together, —a being of infinite perfection, of infinite esteem, love, and complacency in himself, which is infinite love, and infinite justice and truth.

We cannot conceive the Supreme being either as infinitely perfect, or just, or happy, without an infinite love and preference of himself above all other things; which is one way of conceiving with due reverence divine essential holiness.

No other being can be perfect, just, or happy, without the same moral perfection, holiness, or preferring and loving God above all things; and, as was shewn before, what we love, or what we love chiefly, we must chiefly delight in contemplating it, in rejoicing in its happiness, or we must chiefly delight in loving it.

All actions flow from the moral disposition of the agent, or his will and inclination. An agent infinitely lovely can do nothing but what is most lovely, and nothing but what is a just reason for the greatest love to himself. He cannot appear unlike himself. Creatures can see nothing but his works, and their own; and if perfectly lovely actions cannot be a temptation, a reason, or excuse, for despising the agent, then all want of holiness in a being capable of it is inexcusable.

We cannot be holy, without approving and loving that moral disposition in ourselves and all others; yea, the more holy a being is, the more it loves and approves of it wherever it is; and the same reason that is for love of holiness, is for want of love, that is, for aversion and hatred of the contrary disposition.

If holiness be the highest justice, ungodliness is the

highest injustice; and if the highest degree of it be hateful, any degree of it, in any person, at any time, must be so proportionably.

What appears unjust to us, we think hateful always when we think on it, or see it; what is hateful at one time, is so always; and the way to remove that hatred is, to remove the object, or to hinder it from appearing to us at all, to forget it.

Whatever be said of punishment of sin, it is certain that the knowledge and hatred of sin, supposing it to exist, is essential to God. It is not an arbitrary thing, but essential, that he sees it all, sees it always, cannot forget it, and therefore always hates it; and if, as was observed before, a finite superior degree of holiness is an infallible cause of a superior hatred of sin, the greatest holiness must cause the greatest hatred of it. It is a moral disposition, and must incline to manifest itself in a manner worthy of the subject of it, and suitable to the object. All hatred inclines to manifest itself, and just hatred inclines to manifest itself in a manner becoming the being who has that hatred. Reason tells us, that the way becoming a sovereign or governor is punishment; and as one of the least manifestations of hatred is withholding manifestations of favour, or all benefits, that itself, in the present case, would be misery.

It is an essential perfection in God, both to give always the greatest reason to creatures to love him, that is, to act always in that manner that is most worthy of his own approbation and theirs, or to be holy and happy, and to manifest the greatest hatred of sin after it is committed. Thus vindictive justice is but a different view of infinite holiness and goodness, the most lovely moral perfections in the world. It is essential to God to approve and love this holiness and justice; and in order

to holiness in us, that is, in order to be happy and to be just, it is necessary to approve of it likewise.

We can have no just or reasonable joy without both loving God, and consequently loving and approving of his vindictive justice; and, on the other hand, we can have no reasonable joy without expecting God's love and favour to us; and therefore it is necessary we know his righteousness manifested in the remission of sins;—without which we can neither truly love him, nor expect his love, that is, we cannot be happy without knowing that he favours us in a just and holy way.

No sacrifice of a mere creature in the room of multitudes can be a manifestation of the greatest essential eternal hatred of sin, or the greatest motive of an eternal law against it. It is not sufficient to have any knowledge of the harmony of vindictive justice, and of mercy in our redemption, but such a knowledge as shall acquiesce, approve, and adore that justice, and delight in contemplation of it, as perfectly amiable, and to believe that we had no reason to despise God, and God no reason in us to love us; for if we believe it was just to give us no favour, all that is given is free.

We can conceive no divine excellency more amiable than the beauty of infinite holiness, or justice and mercy; no manifestation of them comparable to this; excepting the beatific vision itself, we can conceive no contemplation of divine glory so excellent in itself, so suitable to us; and a suitable impression of it (which still admits of degrees) must increase the joy of the beatific vision itself; for the more love we have to an intelligent being, the more delight we have in viewing its excellency and happiness.

God manifested in the flesh is an object which contains both the brightness of the glory of the creator, and

the brighiness of the glory of the creation. The three several orders of excellency and beauty spoken of before are here joined together in the nearest union; absolutely supreme or divine glory, supreme created intellectual glory, and supreme visible or material glory. His human nature has the beauties of the intellectual and material universe united in it.

Our present joy or happiness in this life is proportionable to our knowledge and love of God in Christ. That knowledge and love admits of degrees. It is just to be always making progress in it: one of the most manifest and most necessary means of heightening it is this, to be reflecting on our moral imperfections, sins, and corruptions, to be making progress in the knowledge of them, which is a very easy study, if we are sincerely inclined to it, since the materials lie so near us.

Sense of need makes a favour precious; and sense of unworthiness heightens gratitude to God, which is an essential ingredient of the greatest joy, present or future.

It is impossible to love God without hating ourselves; because it is impossible to love holiness, without hating the contrary disposition.

Reflection on our physical perfections or faculties is useful; but it is in order to see the goodness of the author of them, and the evil of those moral imperfections that have abused them.

But in a state of complete happiness, the mind must be free of moral imperfections. For the inward reflection and contemplation of deformity in ourselves is inconsistent with fulness of joy. But a just mind cannot reflect on its own perfections, though it must be conscious, and reflect on them, otherwise than as derived from the original and essential source of good, and as infinitely inferior to that original.

The enjoyment of the absolutely supreme object is consistent with the enjoyment of the supreme or highest created intellectual glory, in the society of all the most excellent creatures, and with the enjoyment of the supreme or greatest visible material glory, in a place of the greatest light and beauty; and these inferior enjoyments, which, if alone, would be cloying, will not be so, when an uncloying incorruptible joy is joined to them, and enlivens them.

To conclude, therefore, both the things mentioned in the question are ingredients of happiness, the best enjoyment of the best outward objects, and such internal perfection, that the consciousness and reflection on it must be joyful.

NOTES OF SERMONS.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

Mr. MACLAURIN, after he came to Glasgow, had for one of his hearers Mr. George Brown, a merchant, who at one time filled the office of Dean of Guild in that city. His diary, extending from 1745 to 1753, was printed for the private use of his descendants in 1856, and affords evidence that he was a pious and intelligent man.

We feel some scruple in appending the following specimens of notes of Maclaurin's sermons written by Mr. Brown. He seems indeed to have been a man of superior intelligence in religious matters, and so far worthy of trust. Still there are objections to the publication of such notes, and some injustice has been done to the memory of distinguished men by reports after their death of their sermons or addresses, which of course they themselves could not correct or revise for the public eye. What adds to the difficulty in this case is, that these notes were not taken in short hand, as the sermons were preached by Maclaurin. Mr. Brown, on returning home, committed them to writing on the strength of what he could recollect of the sermons. He seems to have been diligent in the task, for he has left twelve quarto volumes of them. They are not, however, all of them notes of sermons by Maclaurin. The

sermons of several other preachers are reported in the same way. The result is most creditable to the writer of the notes, as evincing very careful attention to the message of the preacher, and singular power of memory, to the extent of recalling not merely the outlines of the discourses preached, but even the substance of the illustrations with which the successive topics were enforced.

We have deemed it best to supply one or two specimens only of these notes. There is frequently in the volumes a long series of discourses upon a particular text. Perhaps in some of these better specimens could be found than we now submit. We select in preference, however, what is capable of being submitted in a shape detached and unique, and what shews the warmth of application with which Maclaurin could bring doctrine to bear on the conscience. His sermons may seem generally deficient in their closing appeals. It is said in one of these volumes by Mr. Brown, that the application of the famous sermon on Glorying in the Cross was never written, and in this way the abruptness with which, as we have elsewhere noticed, the discourse concludes may perhaps be accounted for. We cannot more appropriately end this note than by appending the modest caution, which Mr. Brown prefixes to one of these volumes:—"The contents of the following sermons were written down after sermon as near the words in which they were delivered as the writer's memory would serve. So all want of accuracy of style, of connection, and distinctness of expression, is by no means to be imputed to the preacher, but to the writer."

CONTENTS OF A NATIONAL FAST DAY'S SERMON, PREACHED ON THE 9TH DAY OF JANUARY 1745, IN RAMSHORN KIRK, BY MR. JOHN MACLAURIN.

PSALM cxix. 126.—"*It is time for thee, O Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law.*"

In a day of fasting and humiliation, it is highly suitable to consider it as a time wherein the law, the word, the commandments and authority of God is made void; and this should excite true godly sorrow and mourning for the abounding of iniquity. But together with sorrow, we should join earnest prayer to God that He work wonders of His grace, so as to put a stop to the making void of His law. Many are the things that may damp our confidence in lifting up our souls to God, and particularly that the law of God is so much made void among us. But God's ways are not as our ways; but herein He magnifies the sovereignty of His grace and mercy for allowing us to plead as an argument for Him to work, that sinners make void His law. When a nation makes void the law of God, then it is that they are ripe for judgment, and their cup is full. The words include in them sorrow and lamentation, as will appear from other verses in the same Psalm, as in verse 53, "horror hath taken hold of me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law," 136th verse and 158th verse. In the words we have, 1st, The Psalmist's lamentation. 2dly, His prayer or petition. 3dly, The time of the prayer.

1st, We have the Psalmist's lamentation, "for they make void thy law." The word law is taken in different senses. 1. It is taken in a restrained sense, such as in these scriptures, "The law came by Moses," "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness," "The law worketh wrath." The meaning of law here is that rule of obedience given to our first parents. It is the moral law, and it is impossible that the law that condemns sinners can justify them. But 2. Law is taken in a more extensive sense, as comprehending both the law and the gospel. Thus Psalm first, the man is blessed that meditates on "the law of God;" and the gospel is called "the law of faith" in the epistle to the Romans: and one chief branch of the covenant of grace is the putting His law in our hearts, &c.

"They make void thy law." The people of God mourn for the remainders of indwelling sin, and for their sins while in an unconverted state. But then it cannot be properly said that they make void God's law. Though they have not a perfect conformity to the law, yet they have a sincere conformity to it. But sinners make void the law when they accept not of Christ, His righteousness and strength; when they comply not with the ends of the law, as giving the knowledge of sin, and so giving the knowledge of the need of a Saviour, as a schoolmaster to bring to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness, faith in Him working by love, being the mean of deliverance from the guilt of sin, and from transgressions of the law of God. But then it may be asked, Who are the persons that make void God's law? The text calls them, in general, "They," hereby intimating that it is to be taken in a general extensive sense, and that all ranks were making void God's law. But if we confine the words to David's enemies as including them more particularly, then we are to consider David in his humiliation when persecuted, and in his exaltation when raised to the throne, as a type of Christ.

But 2dly, in the words we have David's prayer, "it is time for thee to work." Now that it is a prayer appears from these things: 1. If it were not a prayer but only a declaration, then it would mean only, God is working His judgment on sinners, and executing His wrath for their making void God's law. But 2. It is a prayer that God would work wonders of grace and love for His people, in restraining the abounding of iniquity, in putting a stop to the making void of His law, and in turning of sinners from their transgressions. In times when God makes signal appearances for His church, it is a time when He displays the sovereignty of grace, and works wonders of mercy on sinners, and also when He works judgment and wrath on His impenitent and incorrigible enemies. Thus, when God sent His Son into the world, then it was that He wrought the most wonderful works of mercy and love; and so all that time he displayed his judgments in punishing His enemies. Christ is said to be for the rising and falling of many in Israel, and to be a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to some, while He is the savour of life to others. When it is said, "It is time for thee to work," the abruptness of the expression intimates this to us, that so great are the things that we need that God should work for us, that we want words to express them. The work of redemption is called in Scripture, by way of eminence, the

work of God. And there are two great branches thereof, the purchase of redemption by the incarnation, humiliation, and satisfaction of Christ on the cross; and 2dly, the application of redemption by the Spirit. God sometimes restrains sin by His providences and outward instruments, but that which strikes at the root of restraining of sin, is the work of regeneration wrought in the soul.

The 3d thing in the words is the time, wherein it is suitable to the glory of God, to His perfections, and particularly His mercy to work, when His law is made void; or to consider the connection between the first and second part of the verses, some may say, It is true we should mourn that God's law is made void, we should plead that God would put a stop to it, but how can it be that we can make the law of God's being made void an argument for pleading that God would put a stop to it? But the answer is, that the ways of God are not as ours, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. Zion's need has always been the time of His delivering her, and hereby He displays the sovereignty of His grace and love. In the 59th chapter of Isaiah, mention is made of various things whereby the law of God is made void, and then he adds, in the sixth verse, and "he saw that there was no man, and wondered there was no intercessor. Therefore, His arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him."

From the words we observe this doctrine, that as we ought to mourn that the law of God is made void and abounds, so we should improve this to excite us to plead; and therefore it is time that the Lord should work.

In prosecuting the words, the first thing to be spoken to is to shew when it is that the law of God is made void, and when it abounds. 1st, The law of God is made void when sinners mourn not for their transgressions of the law with a supreme sorrow and hatred—when they are not convinced of sin by the law—when they accept not of Christ as the end of the law for righteousness—when they take not hold of the covenant of grace—when they seek not reconciliation by the blood of Christ; for they never can be reconciled to the law of God till they be reconciled to God. They have never been made the epistle of Christ, written by the Spirit of God on the fleshly tables of the heart. They have not the chief desires of the soul going out after the Father, Son, and Spirit, as manifesting their love on the new covenant. Again, they who make void God's law are such who have no love to others, and who are not grieved when they behold transgressors making

void of the law. Thus it is that sinners make void the law of God. But then making void the law of God may be said to abound when outward gross sins do abound both against first and second tables; and the law of worship is made void when people neglect the worship of God in private and secret. The law of reverence is made void by profane cursing and swearing; and O how much does this abound among us, both in young and old. Again, the law of the Sabbath is made void by worldly employments or worldly recreations and diversions. How much does profanation of the Sabbath abound among us! How many seem as it were greedy to have the honour of abolishing of the Sabbath! How many are concerned, as it were, that the time should come, and that they should be the unhappy instruments of it, when the whole town should break loose, and walk and profane the Sabbath. Such persons are said to have some other good qualities, to be of good and friendly obliging dispositions. Surely if it were so, good manners would oblige them, that they should not be the instruments of offending and disobliging multitudes, I hope, of good people in the place. The law of God is made void by servants and children disobeying their masters and parents, and parents and masters not instructing their children and servants.

Again, the law of love is made void by enmity, slander, reproach, and malice. Again, the law of purity and chastity is made void by lewdness. How much does uncleanness abound in the place, which has been discovered within these three and a half years! It is ground of sorrow that uncleanness so much abounds, but it is matter of thankfulness that it has been discovered. How much is the law of temperance and moderation made void by excessive continued drinking, even whole nights, to the detriment of the body and worldly substance! Again, the law of God may be said to be made void when religion is decayed from what it was in former times in a place. How much has the law of the Sabbath, the law of religious worship and reverence of God's name decayed in this place by what once it was! Further, the law of God is made void when errors do abound, such as infidelity and open disbelief of the gospel. How much is the word of God and law of faith made void by the infidelity that prevails so much in this day in these lands, and even in the city! All errors that tend to lessen the doctrine of salvation through Christ, tend towards an open disbelief of the gospel; and when people are drawn away from the doctrines of justification by the righteousness of Christ, from the doctrines of

regeneration and conversion, then they make void the law of God, and are going towards infidelity. How ought we then to mourn when the law of God is made void! Did we see a house burning, and one ready to perish in the flames, would we not be concerned for him, and would we not be much more so if he wilfully chose to continue in the flame? Did we see a person wilfully running into a pit to his own ruin, would not this excite compassion? Did we behold a person lying under many sore troubles, would we not pity him? But the evils sinners are liable unto are ten times, a hundred times, a thousand times greater than all these, and therefore our pity, compassion, and concern for them should be proportionally greater. Where is all our faith, then, of the reality of another world, where is our faith of that wrath that is to come, if the people of God are unconcerned when sinners make void God's law? God has a kingdom of grace carrying on in the world. Christ's mystical body is the building, and the world is as the scaffold; and when the building is completed, the scaffold shall be taken down, the world will be ended, and the heavens and earth fly away and be burnt up.

CONTENTS OF A SERMON PREACHED AT CATHCART ON THE COMMUNION MONDAY, BEING 6TH OF MAY 1745, BY MR. JOHN MACLAURIN.

PSALM cii. 13, 14.—"*Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.*"

In these words we have two things. 1st. A promise of God concerning the prosperity of Zion, wherein the Psalmist makes profession of his faith and hope:—"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy on Zion." 2dly. We have the reason of the Psalmist's hope and faith in this promise:—"For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof." For explication of the promise here made, we observe that God is said to arise when He appears in His glory and exerts His power, either in works of grace and mercy, or in works of righteous judgment: as when it is said that God will arise and His enemies shall be scattered; and in Isaiah lx. it is said, "Arise and shine, thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen on thee."

The next word used in this promise is, "And shall have mercy on Zion." All God's mercies should be regarded. But God has mercy on Zion especially when He bestows saving and sanctifying mercy on her. God has mercy on Zion when He blesses her with outward peace, liberty, and prosperity. But what is all this peace and liberty, and plenty of means of grace, without the power of grace and life of godliness? When it is said that the time to favour Zion is come, some from this may take occasion to object in this manner, "Why is it said that the time to favour Zion is come; does not God always favour Zion; is He not unchangeable in His love; and when Zion complains that the Lord had forsaken her, how does the Lord chide her when He says, can a woman forget her sucking child?" But the answer to this is, that though God having loved His own, He loves them to the end; yet God is said in an especial manner to favour Zion, when He increases the number of the inhabitants of Zion, and increases their graces; when He sends showers of blessings on her, and rains righteousness.

For explaining the encouragement in the text, that God would arise and have mercy on Zion, for thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof, we observe, that when it is said, thy servants take pleasure in her stones, the meaning is not that they delight and rejoice that Zion is in a low state and condition, but it imports that they rejoiced in the former glory of Zion, that they took pleasure in the remains of Zion's glory. It implies a concern about that disposition mentioned in Revelation, to strengthen the things that remained and were ready to perish; and it imports a faith and hope that God would yet arise and have mercy on Zion. The taking pleasure in the stones of Zion implies the not being ashamed of her in her low estate. When may people be said to favour the dust of Zion? This people do (1.) when they abound in earnest prayer and wrestling with God, that His power and glory may yet be seen in the sanctuary. (2.) People favour the dust of Zion by their life and example shining as lights in the world.

From the words thus explained, and as they stand connected, we observe this doctrine, that when people are stirred up, and stir up themselves, to an eminent concern for the chiefest and highest interest of Zion, for the declarative glory of God in the salvation of sinners, then this is a joyful evidence of God's favouring Zion being near, and is a mean of His arising and having mercy on Zion. In prosecuting this doctrine, the first thing pro-

posed is to consider what is presupposed to our favouring the dust of Zion. Now this presupposes that we ourselves have experienced the influences of the Spirit in His saving, renewing, and sanctifying blessings. We never will pray with suitable earnestness and sincerity for the downpouring of the Spirit on others, unless we have experienced this ourselves. Here it is proper to consider how sinners become living stones of this spiritual building. This is more generally explained in the second chapter of 1st Peter. But more particularly, sinners, in order to their becoming living stones of this spiritual building, must be hewn as it were by the prophets, and awakened to a sense of sin and danger. They must have all their false foundations and lying refuges swept away. They must be joined to the Lord by that faith whereby the believing soul lays the whole stress on the foundation God has laid in Zion. They must be made temples of the Holy Ghost, and must have a due concern about those graces that adorn this temple,—the ornaments of the hidden man in the heart, of which we have account in the 15th and 25th Psalms. Thus it appears, that sinners must be made true inhabitants of the spiritual Zion before they can be true favourers of her dust, and take pleasure in her stones. Thus have I shown how it is that sinners come to partake of this blessing of being living stones of the heavenly Zion.

We proceed now to a second general head, which is to consider in what respects Zion may be said to lie in the dust, and how the people of God may be said to take pleasure in her when in this state.

This Psalm and the words of the text have immediate relation to the return of the children of Israel from the Babylonish captivity; and we see from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, the prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who lived after the Babylonish captivity, that the children of Israel still met with opposition in building Zion, both from the Samaritans without them, and corruptions that were within them. How happy are we in these lands, who enjoy outward liberty and peace beyond our forefathers who were persecuted. But the chiefest and highest interests of Zion are not outward peace and liberty, for even these have sometimes been a mean of bringing Zion low. Now the servants of the Lord take pleasure in the low state of Zion, when they, in the 1st place, mourn and sorrow for these things that bring Zion low, such as that iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. They mourn for the opposition made to the fundamentals of Christianity,

or to Christianity itself. They mourn for the neglect of the power and life of godliness. But 2dly, together with godly sorrow for the low state of Zion, we should join earnest fervent prayer, turning these grounds of sorrow into arguments of pleading that the Lord would arise and have mercy on Zion. This was the exercise of the Psalmist, "It is time for the Lord to work, for the wicked make void thy law." 3dly, Taking pleasure in Zion when in low circumstances implies the conflict, the fighting of the fight of faith and of hope that God would arise to favour Zion notwithstanding of all opposition and hindrances of hope. Oftentimes Zion has been brought very low before God arose and had mercy on her. The children of Israel, which was then the Church of God, was brought very low when God delivered them out of the Egyptian bondage. The church of God was in melancholy circumstances at the incarnation of the Redeemer. How low was Zion before our reformation! It is here useful to observe, that the Scripture teaches us that God sometimes withdraws from His church, or particular members, to stir them up to fervent prayer and sore wrestling for His returning. Thus, when the uncreated angel of the covenant appeared to Jacob, he says to him, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." This was to stir up Jacob to wrestling with God; and therefore it is said that he wept and made supplication, had power with God and prevailed. The Canaanitish woman met with many repulses from the Lord, but this was to stir her up to more importunity, and so she continued still in the exercise of hope amidst all discouragement, and obtained that commendation, "O woman, great is thy faith." When our Saviour was conversing with the disciples going to Emmaus, and as they drew nigh to the village whither they went, He made as if He would have gone further, in order to excite them to pleading with Him to abide with them; and hence it is said that they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us." It is needful also to notice the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush, removing all impediments and hindrances in the way of His having mercy on Zion, when the children of Israel passed the Red Sea, yet still they met hindrances in the wilderness which kept them from the promised land for a long time, still God had mercy on them and gave them the promised land. After the return of the children of God from the Babylonish captivity, we see that the people of God met with much opposition from the Samaritans without and corrupt members from within, yet God removed these obstacles by means of literal Zerubbabel, of whom

the prophet speaks thus, "Who art thou, O mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."

I proceed now to the 3d general head, to explain what is imported in our praying that God would arise and have mercy on Zion to favour her. When the Psalmist prays that God would have mercy on Zion, he does not merely pray that Zion and the temple might be built up again, and the worship and ordinances thereof performed, but chiefly that he might see his power and glory in his sanctuary as formerly. Now God's having mercy and favouring Zion may be considered absolutely or comparatively, when He pours down of the influences of His Spirit more plentifully at one time than at another time, or more on one corner of Zion than on another. Now when we pray that God may arise and have mercy on Zion, we should pray, in the first place, for the gracious influences of the Spirit to be poured down on Zion. You may ask what these influences are which we should pray for others. I answer, (1.) we should pray for the same influences of the Spirit on Zion that we pray for ourselves. We should pray for the influences of the Spirit of grace to look to Him who was pierced and mourn; for the influences of the Spirit of grace to shine into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. We should pray for the awakening, illuminating, quickening, and sanctifying influences of the Spirit. We should pray for these influences of the Spirit for carrying on a work of grace and mortification in the soul.

But (2.) when we pray that God would have mercy on Zion and favour her, we should pray for all these influences of grace mentioned in the former head, on all the means of grace and ordinances of the gospel. We should pray for these influences on public worship, on family worship, on social worship and prayer, on private worship, and on all the ordinances of word and sacrament.

(3.) We should pray for all these influences on all ranks of persons in Zion, such as on magistrates, ministers, judicatories.

(4.) We should pray for these influences to be poured down on all the corners of Zion, so all flesh may see the glory of the Lord.

(5.) We should pray for the influences of grace on the corner of Zion, and places where we live in particular.

(6.) We should pray that these influences of the Spirit of grace may come in power and in the demonstration of the Spirit, praying that He would make His work and power appear unto His

servants, and His glory unto their children; that He would gird His sword on His thigh, and in glory and majesty ride prosperously; and that He would put plentiful abundant healing virtue on the waters of the sanctuary. Here we may notice that the Scripture teaches us that God's arising and having mercy on Zion admits of various degrees, as is evident from such examples as these:—When the captivity of Zion returned from Babylon, it is said in Psalm cxxvi. they were like them that dreamed. And in our Saviour's days, it is said that at that time the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent took it by force; when still it is observable that multitudes of the Jews rejected Christ, and said, have any of the scribes or Pharisees believed on Him?

I proceed now to a 4th general head, to consider what is meant by the servants of the Lord favouring the dust of Zion.

1. The people of God favour Zion when they pray earnestly and plead for the increase of the inhabitants of Zion and their graces.

(1.) They wrestle and plead earnestly for these influences of the Spirit mentioned in a former head. (2.) As these influences of grace are the matter of our prayers, so as to the manner of them, they should be fervent, earnest, and continued prayers, giving God no rest till He make Zion a praise through the whole earth. (3.) They should be social and united prayers; and what encouragement in the word of God is there to this duty? Christ says, if two agree on one thing on earth, it shall be granted in heaven. What may we not hope for, when not only two but multitudes agree in united, fervent supplications to a throne of grace, that God would arise, appear in His glory, and have mercy on Zion? (4.) This prayer should be mixed with suitable arguments of pleading, such as those taken from the glory of the three persons of the Godhead. We may plead that the chiefest interests of Zion have a tendency to the glory of the love of the Father, executed by the Son, and applied by the Spirit. Again, we may draw arguments of pleading from the perfections of God. Thus we may plead from the sovereignty of God's grace. When Ephraim went on frowardly in his way, God in sovereign free love says, "I have seen his ways, and will heal them, and restore comforts unto him." We may plead from the unchangeableness of God; we may plead from His power both in former times, and as to what He has promised to do. Thus the prophet pleads—"Awake, O arm of the Lord, as in ancient days and generations of old: art thou not he that brake Rahab in

pieces, and wounded the head of the dragon?" We may plead the faithfulness and mercy of God.

Again, we may draw arguments of pleading even from the low condition and melancholy state Zion may be reduced unto. Some may object, What need is there of this earnest pleading and praying or Zion; does not God come in a way of sovereignty and have mercy on Zion, when perhaps few or none are praying for it? But I answer, that if God thus in the sovereignty of His love arises and favours Zion, when there is no wrestling for it, how much more may we expect that He will have mercy on Zion when we are suitably exercised in prayer and pleading? Besides, we do not know but God's arising and having mercy on any corner of Zion may be an answer to the prayers put by the people of God in another corner of Zion.

I proceed, in the 5th place, to another general head, which is to consider how it is that when the people of God are stirred up to an eminent concern about the true interests of Zion, this is a hopeful evidence that God's arising to have mercy on Zion is near.

1. This is evident from the connection of the two verses where our text is,—"Thou shalt arise and have mercy on Zion;" and the reason is given in the next verse,—"For thy servants take pleasure in her stones and favour her dust;" as if it had been said, Now I see my poor people stirred up to an eminent concern for my declarative glory in the salvation of sinners. They take pleasure in Zion in her meanest circumstances, even in her stones and dust, and therefore deliverance shall not be far off. I will now arise and have mercy on Zion, and the set time to favour her shall be come.

2. This is evident from the character that the Lord bears as the prayer-hearing God. Thus it is said in the 17th verse of this Psalm, "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."

3. It appears from the great honour that God has put on praying for Zion. Thus one half of the petitions of the Lord's prayer are for the welfare of Zion.

4. God's arising and having mercy on Zion, in answer and as returns of prayer, greatly sweetens these appearances of God in favouring Zion.

5. Consider the great excellency that is in this exercise of favouring and praying for Zion when reduced low, as it tends to strengthen the graces of the Spirit which are therein exercised, and from which

prayer for Zion should flow. Such as love to God, love to the church of God, love to saints, and love to poor, perishing souls. But some serious but dejected souls may object, that if matters were right with themselves they would pray for Zion; but as all is wrong with them, all their concern is about their own case and condition, so that they have no time to pray for Zion. To which I answer, that praying for Zion and for ourselves is nowise inconsistent, and does not hinder one another. We see what was the practice of the Psalmist in his penitential psalm, when his conscience was pierced with a sense of the sin of adultery. One would think if at any time he forgot Zion it would be at this time, and yet we find him even in these circumstances praying that God would build up the wall of Zion. He well knew that praying for the welfare of Zion could do him no harm, on the contrary would do him much good.

For the improvement of what has been said, we may observe the perverse temper, the contempt of the mercy of God, the cruelty to souls, that is in those who are unconcerned whether God arise and have mercy on Zion or not. The angels in heaven rejoice at the conversion of sinners. The devils in hell rejoice at the backslidings of professors. But how great is the perverseness of those professors of religion, who can rejoice at the falls and backslidings of communicants or Christians? Such rejoice in evil. If a neighbouring village were burning, whereby some of our fellow-creatures were ready to be burned, would it not argue great cruelty to be looking on unconcerned? But much greater cruelty is it to immortal souls to be unconcerned about their being consumed with everlasting burnings. Such persons who are now unconcerned about the low state of religion should consider, that if God should even in their own time return to Zion, and give blessed days of power, yet He may be provoked so as they should be of no benefit to them. They should see the time, but not taste of the benefits. Like the rich nobleman in 2 Kings vii., when he would not believe the words of the prophet concerning the plenty in Samaria, Elisha said unto him, "Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." The people of God, from what has been said, should be excited to take pleasure in the stones and dust of Zion, pleading that the Lord would arise and have mercy on her. Many are the motives to this exercise, which might be drawn from Scripture precepts, Scripture examples, and Scripture promises. Again, we may observe the graces of the Spirit in the soul are hereby strength

ened, such as love to God, love to Zion, love to saints, love to poor perishing souls, love to the ordinances of the gospel, and love to the truths of the gospel.

What has been said may be improved for trial and self-examination, whether we are among the number of those who take pleasure in the stones and favour the dust of Zion.

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